Schenker's Organicism Revisited

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In his 1993 publication, "Schenker's Organicism Reexamined," Kevin Korsyn poses the question: "Was Schenker always an organicist?"[1] A point of reference for numerous writers investigating this issue has been Ruth Solie's 1980 article, "The Living Work: Organicism and Musical Analysis." Summarizing and reinforcing what people had been saying about Schenker since at least the 1910s, Solie described him in that publication as an "organicist *par excellence*."[2] William Pastille challenged this assessment in a 1984 article, "Heinrich Schenker, Anti-Organicist." Pastille's argument, that Schenker changed in the course of his career from anti-organicist to wholly committed organicist, centers on his reading of an early essay by Schenker published in the Leipzig-based *Musikalisches Wochenblatt*, titled "Der Geist der musikalischen Technik" (henceforth, "Geist"). Pastille contends that, while Schenker was initially uneasy about employing organicist concepts for musical explanation, as indicated by remarks in "Geist," he gained confidence in such applications in conjunction with his belief in the musical genius. Put another way, in the person of the musical genius Schenker found a composer type who could realize the special requirements of organic artistic production: the composer's conscious mind stands outside the creation of the organic musical work, and the work produced in this manner exhibits the causality that is an essential feature of organic artworks.[3]

Allan Keiler responded to Pastille in a 1989 publication, "The Origins of Schenker's Thought: How Man is Musical."[4] Keiler's aim was to provide a synchronic rather than a diachronic reading of

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[1] Kevin Korsyn (1993): 82.

[2] Ruth Solie (1980): 151.

[3] William Pastille (1984): 29-36. Ideas summarized in this paragraph are explored throughout Pastille's brief article.

[4] Keiler (1989): 273-298.

Schenker's essay. Thus, while a writer like Pastille interprets "Geist" in the longitudinal framework of Schenker's publishing career, Keiler emphasizes instead Schenker's output "in his first decade as a writer on music when he was an active music critic for a number of German and Austrian newspapers and musical journals."[5] Additionally, Keiler regards Schenker's essay in part as a response to writers like Hanslick whose formalism Schenker found disturbing and whose tenets he was eager to oppose. Thus, for instance, with Schenker's emphasis on *Inhalt*, or content, which he believed was "eternal and [only] reinvigorated by the imaginative power, or fantasy of the creative artist," Keiler argues that Schenker set himself in opposition to Hanslick's "generalizing form."[6] Furthermore, Keiler cites a vivid description from another essay of Schenker's published just one year prior to "Geist." There Schenker enthusiastically describes musical works which have been "conceived and received in one stroke . . . the whole fate of their creation, life, growth and end already designated in the first seed."[7] Because the composer's conscious mind has no opportunity to intervene, such works satisfy organic requirements with respect to their genesis. In Keiler's view, then, Schenker's privileging of content over form, and his entertainment of the notion that

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[5] Keiler (1989): 275.

[6] Keiler (1989): 286. In this section of the article, Keiler comments on Schenker's opposition of "generalizing form," with its emphasis on stereotyped musical features such as modulations, cadences, harmonic progressions and even specific genres, to individual content, whose concern is musical specifics.

[7] Schenker, "Eugen d'Albert," *Die Zukunft*, Bd. 9 (6 October 1894): 33. Cited in Keiler (1989): 287. I assume that the translation is by Keiler. ["Solche Werke wurden in Einem empfangen und geboren und schon im ersten Keim lag das ganze Schicksal der Schöpfung, Leben, Wachsthum und Ende, bestimmt vorgezeichnet."] In the sentences immediately following, however, Schenker seems to question the description, writing, "A work of just this sort couldn't be conceived in an atmosphere without reflection; dust settled on it during its creation—its becoming—and that was as little preventable as the dust which accumulates on any object surrounded by air." ["Da ein solches Werk eben nicht in reflexionfreier Luft erzeugt werden konnte, so kam mitten im Werden und Schaffen ein Staub angeflogen, und Das war eben so wenig zu verhüten, wir irgend ein Gegenstand vor Staub zu bewahren ist, den die Luft unmittelbar umgiebt."] Another example of Schenker's acknowledging a compositional process unmediated by the composer's consciousness comes in "Geist." I discuss it on p. 16.

musical works might come about without conscious meddling from the composer, significantly weakens an interpretation of Schenker's career as moving from anti- to arch-organicist. Instead, Keiler argues, "even in [Schenker's] earliest period of work . . . the influence and stimulus of organic thinking can be established in more than one context."[8]

One other discussion of Schenker's "Geist" essay requires comment here. Korsyn's "Schenker's Organicism Reexamined," cited at the beginning of this article, responds to both Keiler and Pastille. Korsyn claims that his reading of "Geist" will vindicate Pastille by "reconstructing the historical, philosophical, and biographical background to 'Geist,' a background that both Keiler and Pastille largely overlooked"[9]—a background that acknowledges the influence of the German idealist tradition upon Schenker's work but that shifts the focus to Austrian intellectual life contemporaneous with Schenker's essay.

While many details of Korsyn's discussion lie beyond the scope of the present study, his attention to terminological oppositions spelled out in Schopenhauer's account of genius—including organic/non-organic,[10] genius/non-genius, objective/subjective, unconscious/conscious, unwilled/willed—and that circulate in "Geist," provide a significant point of departure for the program I explore here. Korsyn presents these as a table of binary oppositions and then invokes Jacques Derrida, who argues that such oppositions are never neutral but always involve a "violent hierarchy" in which one term "governs the other . . . or has the upper hand."[11] In Korsyn's table, it is the first of the two terms that is "privileged, constituting a system of valorizations that defines organicist ideology."[12] The question that drives Korsyn's inquiry, then, is the extent to which Schenker accepts the organicist hierarchy involving these terms. Korsyn concludes that Schenker

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[8] Keiler (1989): 291.

[9] Korsyn (1993): 85.

[10] Korsyn's chart defines the opposition as organic/non-organic, though his discussion includes references to the mechanical. I refer to it as mechanical/organic for reasons I outline on p. 10.

[11] Jacques Derrida, *Positions*, trans. Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981): 41. Cited in Korsyn (1993): 94-95.

[12] Korsyn (1993): 95.

not only does not accept the "system of valorizations" but that he "deconstructs and destabilizes it by showing that the inorganic side of the opposition contaminates the organic."[13]

The last three writers discussed here characterize Schenker's work in the "Geist" essay variably as anti-organicist, as anti-Hanslickian, and as critical of the binary oppositions bound up with the mechanical and organic. Which of these best characterizes Schenker's stance in his first decade of publication? As Korsyn remarks, "'Geist' is a very heterogeneous text, full of unresolved conflicts suggesting that Schenker was responding to very diverse cultural pressures."[14] And, since each writer focuses on different passages from the essay, it is not difficult to accommodate aspects of each to valuable ends: Pastille, for drawing attention to Schenker's early ambivalence concerning the relevance of organic models to musical explanation; Keiler, for detailing different contexts that may have stimulated organicist thinking in Schenker's first decade of publication; and Korsyn, for pointing up the centrality of binary oppositions to Schenker's (and others') understanding of organicism.

Some clarifications are yet in order, however. Pastille's provocative sharpening of Schenker's stance, that is, declaring Schenker an anti- rather than ambivalent organicist, overlooks key passages in Schenker's essay, especially one in which Schenker expressly admits an organic aspect of composition (see discussion below, pp. 16, 17). Further, Keiler expresses frustration with Pastille for drawing from Schenker's essay a plot component integral to a dramatic narrative in which Schenker changes from anti- to arch-organicist over the course of his lifetime. This complaint is itself undercut, however, by Keiler's claim that we should see the work of Schenker's first decade "as the dramatic and unexpected foundation for his later theories."[15] An attempt to read Schenker's first-decade writings in the manner Keiler prescribes carries with it its own powerful narrative assumptions: these writings are integrally connected to the writings that follow, and their function is not merely synchronic but diachronic. Finally,

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[13] Korsyn (1993): 99.
[14] Korsyn (1993): 85.
[15] Keiler (1989): 295.

Korsyn's contention that Schenker's criticism of the mechanical/organic opposition necessarily casts the mechanical in an entirely negative light is problematic. If Korsyn's forceful term "contamination" rightly draws attention to Schenker's ambivalence that a pure, unmediated process of composition, untouched by the corrupting force of the composer's subjectivity, is possible, it simultaneously obscures a significant meaning bound up with Schenker's title, "Der Geist der musikalischen Technik." Schenker argues here not for the contamination of *Geist* by *Technik* but rather for the powerful infusion of *Geist* into *Technik*. And herein lies the central argument of the present article: historically, mechanical and organic have been defined as oppositional terms, with the organic frequently held to be superior to the mechanical, as discussed by Korsyn. In Schenker's "Geist" and other published work, however, not only are the boundaries between mechanical and organic more fluid than their history might suggest, but also this fluidity and categorical intermingling constitutes a foundational component of great tonal composition. Additionally in Schenker's and other's work, the mechanical achieves a more favorable and even essential status than that attributed it by a writer like Schopenhauer.

I must spell out, then, my own interest in "Geist," and the program I explore here. Like Keiler, I have found it fruitful to investigate in Schenker's essay evidence of organicist impulses. Like Pastille, I have obtained compelling data by viewing Schenker's writings in a longitudinal framework. Finally, like Korsyn, I have gained much from reading "Geist" as an exploration of binary oppositions bound up with organicist thought, specifically the primary opposition formulated here as mechanical/organic. Indeed, it is Korsyn's essay that points most directly to the heart of my inquiry: investigating to what extent the opposition of mechanical and organic serves as a formative impulse across Schenker's career. Korsyn amply documents Schenker's engagement of such oppositions in "Geist." But Schenker did not stop there. In the monographs he considered the centerpieces of his theoretical work, as well as in many other publications, Schenker calls upon the opposition repeatedly. Most significantly for present purposes, Schenker engages it to formulate his account of the relationship between species counterpoint and free

composition, a preoccupation across his career and an issue at the core of his theoretical enterprise. Significantly, Schenker's account incorporates an unexpected relationship between mechanical and organic in which the mechanical gains not merely acceptance but rather, central potency.

Why does such an inquiry matter? First, in my own readings of Schenker's major texts, the opposition of mechanical and organic has struck me as not only ubiquitous but formative. Schenker's writings themselves thus seem to cry out for such an inquiry. Second, the opposition of mechanical and organic figures pivotally in Schenker's discussions of counterpoint and free composition, unquestionably a central thrust of his theoretical endeavor. Finally, the opposition informs an essential underpinning of Schenker's theoretical formulations, specifically, his predilection for polemic. Readers of Schenker's texts well know that his explications depend upon a theoretical straw man whom Schenker decisively levels.[16] In the case of the mechanical/organic opposition, however, Schenker repeatedly draws in the mechanical not merely as an item to sharpen his point and then be summarily dismissed, but rather as a viable force upon which certain key aspects of his theories ultimately depend. In this way, the mechanical assumes the foundational significance in a touchstone of Schenker's theory: the relationship between counterpoint and free composition.

What will we learn from such an inquiry, and how will it affect our understanding of Schenker's theoretical endeavors? First, I will challenge the notion that "Geist" is most fruitfully read as the manifesto of an unequivocal anti-organicist. While the essay lacks the systematic approach and organization of later writings (as noted by writers discussed here), under my reading it is not so far removed in its areas of interest from Schenker's later writings that we need separate it from everything that followed. Indeed, the focus of the present study on the formative power exerted by the mechanical/organic opposition speaks directly to continuities across Schenker's career. Second, we will gain insight into the

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[16] Wayne Alpern characterizes the method like this: "Schenker's literary style has a lawyerly flair, bristling with the tenor of musical advocacy. He mercilessly cross-examines his adversaries like hostile witnesses on the stand, demolishing their testimony one by one." See Alpern (1999): 1464.

concern expressed by Schenker across many decades and in numerous publications to clarify the relationship between counterpoint and free composition and, particular to this article, his consistent formulation of this relationship with the language and related oppositions of mechanical and organic. Finally, as Korsyn's article intimates, we will learn that for Schenker, the opposition of mechanical and organic was not always in so violent a hierarchy as Derrida's language would demand. Thus, while it is true that Schenker frequently employed opposition to render especially forceful those items he put forward as inviolate theoretical truths, in his efforts to clarify the relationship of counterpoint and free composition he both opposed and bridged them, implicating the language of mechanical and organic to achieve that rapprochement. I begin by discussing the mechanical/organic opposition and terms related to it.

I. The Mechanical/Organic Opposition

In his dictionary of cultural terms, *Keywords*, Raymond Williams supplies two central definitions for the organic: first, a means to refer to "the processes or products of life, in human beings, animals or plants"; and second, a metaphorical description of "certain kinds of relationship and thence certain kinds of society."[17] Williams then introduces another significant aspect of the organic: the opposition between organic and mechanical. Though the contrast originates in ancient Greece, nineteenth-century interest in it arose in part as a reaction against the increasing mechanization that propelled the industrial revolution. In many settings, "mechanical" thus became a term of denigration, "organic" one of praise.

The primary opposition mechanical/organic carries with it a number of related oppositions, as Korsyn's article indicates. I have summarized in Table 1 those significant for Schenker's writings and for the present study. The fundamental opposition and first five pairs figure centrally in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century philosophy and literary theory; they also exercise a shaping force in

[17] Raymond Williams (1985): 227. The remainder of this paragraph summarizes material from pp. 227-229.

Schenker's musical theories. Counterpoint is, of course, central to Schenker's theorizing. Since my purpose in this article is not to posit definitive sources for these oppositional pairs, I provide a selection of publications in which the terms circulate.

Table 1. Mechanical/Organic Oppositions

Mechanical	Organic
machine	organism
technik	*Geist*
subjective[18]	objective
rule	law
artisan/architect	genius
counterpoint (in the context of an exercise)	counterpoint (in free composition)

For the literary critic and poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the language of mechanical and organic assumed explanatory power for literature in a metaphorical sense, with an explicit preference for the organic;[19] for a natural philosopher such as Johann Gottfried Herder, who attempted to explain the functioning of the universe in organic terms, such language engaged the metaphysical.[20] In eighteenth-century cosmology, philosophers typically viewed the universe as a kind of smoothly functioning machine; in the

[18] The mechanical as subjective may seem counterintuitive. Its multivalence, moreover, makes discussion of it complex and potentially confusing. I address these matters on pp. 9, 12, 13.

[19] M.H. Abrams (1953) provides a classic discussion. See especially pp. 156-183.

[20] Two important sources for Herder's discussion of the organic are *Gott: Einige Gespräche* (1787) and *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (1784-1791). A helpful summary of Herder's organicist thinking applied to metaphysics appears in Frederick Beiser, "Herder, Johann Gottfried," in Edward Craig, ed., Vol. 4 (1998): 382-383. Beiser sums up Herder's thinking in this manner: "The net result of Herder's *Gott* was his vitalistic pantheism or pantheistic vitalism" (383). I discuss aspects of Herder's organicism in the first two chapters of my dissertation. See Duerksen (2003).

nineteenth, they were more apt to describe it as a living organism.[21] *Technik* and *Geist* are terms made prominent by Schenker's title. *Technik*, as Schenker makes clear in later publications, is that which can be taught and, ultimately, controlled by the rational mind. *Geist*, with its centrality to German idealist philosophy, carries with it a host of meanings. Published translations of Schenker's works frequently render it as "spirit" or "mind," with the adjectival form given sometimes as "conceptual."[22] Significant for present purposes is our understanding of it in opposition both to *Technik* and the corporeal or material.[23] Subjective and objective are terms Korsyn notes in the writings of Schopenhauer, with clear partiality for the universality the philosopher associated with objectivity; the opposition of rule and law, meanwhile, achieves prominence in the writings of the philosophers Kant and Hegel.[24] Images of the artist as artisan/architect figure centrally in eighteenth-century aesthetics, while the genius artist finds enduring significance in the nineteenth and early twentieth.[25] Counterpoint is central to Schenker's own

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[21] M.H. Abrams, summarizing Coleridge's attack on mechanism, writes, "And in an important sense, the elements of [Coleridge's] fully developed criticism . . . are consistent—with a consistency that is not primarily logical, or even psychological, but analogical; it consists in fidelity to the archetype, or founding image, to which he has committed himself. This is the contradistinction between atomistic and organic, mechanical and vital—ultimately, between the root analogies of machine and growing plant." See Abrams (1953): 170. Coleridge drew heavily on German idealist writers for his literary criticism.

[22] For a translation of *geistig* as "conceptual," see discussion below, p. 39, footnote 87.

[23] This is in keeping with Ruth Solie's observation that a thread common to different strains of idealist philosophy is an "emphasis on mind-spirit values as opposed to material ones." See Solie (1980): 149. I discuss the dichotomy of material and ideal in the context of the passing tone on pp. 27-29.

[24] For details on Schopenhauer, see p.13, footnote 30; for Kant and Hegel, see below, p. 34.

[25] M. H. Abrams provides this summary of the eighteenth-century view: ". . . the eighteenth-century psychologist developed his scheme of the mind by combining two analogies. One was the analogy of a mechanism, in which the images of sense follow one another according to the laws of mental gravitation. The other was the analogy of an intelligent artisan, or architect, who makes his selection from the materials so proffered, and then puts them together according to his pre-existent blueprint or plan." See Abrams (1953): 166. Korsyn provides ample

theoretical work where, according to his formulation, it functions in both the exercise (the realm of mechanics) and free composition (the organic). In this way, it bridges opposing realms.[26]

My table differs in several respects from Korsyn's chart. First, there is a significant terminological difference: while Korsyn's chart of oppositions derived from Schopenhauer begins with organic and non-organic, mine has as its foundational terms 'mechanical' and 'organic,' for these reasons: this is the historical and characteristic formulation of the opposition; and, it is these terms that inform Schenker's theorizing both in "Geist" and in other publications across his career. Second, I change the order of the terms, because the mechanical was not always viewed in so pejorative a light, even in Schenker's writings. Further, even in the writings of devoted organicists, Schenker's middle- and late-period works included, the mechanical is often viewed as preparatory to the organic. Finally, in a manner akin to Schenker, I hope to challenge the notion that privileging the organic necessitates rejecting the mechanical as entirely negative.

One additional comment is in order. Presenting the opposition and its related terms in chart form might suggest that Schenker (and others) applied the terms with absolute consistency. In fact, the relative discreteness of the oppositional terms remained in play through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. And, immediately in the discussion of "Geist" we shall see how Schenker himself obscures the chart's tidy columns. That said, the fact of writers' sometimes inconsistent use of the opposition supplies circumstances rich for the investigation that is at the heart of this article.

II. "Der Geist der musikalischen Technik"

Schenker's "Geist" essay, based on a lecture he presented at a meeting of the Philosophical Society of the University of Vienna, has as one of its central topics the opposing models mechanical

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documentation of the centrality of genius to nineteenth-century organic thought in "Schenker's Organicism Reexamined." See especially pp. 92-94, 102-103.

[26] Not incidentally, Schenker titles the final section of his *Kontrapunkt* II "Bridges to Free Composition" ["Übergänge zum Freien Satz"].

and organic. Indeed, as Korsyn has noted, the essay's title itself "inscribes" central terms of this opposition: *Geist* and *Technik* (see Table 1).[27] Pastille's provocatively titled "Heinrich Schenker, Anti-Organicist" garnered significant scholarly attention in English-speaking academe for this early essay by Schenker. In particular, with his focus on a statement from near the end of Schenker's article—"As a matter of fact, no musical content is never organic"[28]—Pastille challenged notions of Schenker as ardent organicist across his publishing career. Noteworthy for the present study is the fact that Schenker, in the very process of detailing his skepticism about the matter, demonstrates his familiarity with issues engendered by organicist critical positions and, especially, crucial distinctions involving the mechanical and the organic, the primary opposition that constitutes the basis for Table 1. Also significant is Schenker's implication of counterpoint when introducing the opposition. Several key passages from Schenker's essay focus the discussion.

Near the beginning of the essay, Schenker writes:

> I want to make a crude, but illuminating comparison here between the discipline of counterpoint and the discipline of independent mechanical finger-dexterity that every performing artist must acquire if he is to meet at least the mechanical and technical challenges [*mechanische Technik*] posed of an artwork. In the same way that the discipline of finger-dexterity prepares the fingers . . . to meet the mechanical challenges [*mechanische Technik*] of any artwork . . . the discipline of counterpoint likewise enables the imagination to see countless different dispositions and transformations of a theme, in order ultimately to determine the disposition best suited to the emotional compass of the artwork being contemplated. **But once all of the work's contrapuntal techniques have been fixed permanently, they become just as subjective as the work's emotional character. For this reason, I believe, J.S. Bach's counterpoint is the generative soul of his artworks, wide-ranging and magnificently idiosyncratic, acquired, undoubtedly, from long and difficult intellectual discipline [*einer langen und strengen Schule seines Geistes*] and certainly also from a special natural talent; but since its use in his compositions is subjective, one ought not to confuse it with the training he

[27] Korsyn (1993): 102.

[28] A more extensive quotation including this statement, with citation and German original, appears on p. 15, footnote 33.

had previously completed. And one does indeed confuse the two when one maintains that his contrapuntal technique is merely mechanical. . . . Since the listener may well be unable to comprehend Bach's expansive spirit [*Geist*] in terms of his own more limited spirit [*Geist*], he assumes, merely because his own interest wanes, that the heart of Bach's artistry is also exhausted; at the point where his own inspiration [*Beseelung*] leaves off, he begins to imagine that the music becomes a mechanical formula [*mechanischen Formel*].[29]

In this excerpt, Schenker initially emphasizes the terms 'mechanical' and 'technique.' Presenting finger dexterity and counterpoint as analogues of one another, he argues that each addresses mechanical requirements of the artwork. Schenker's ensuing discussion suggests that counterpoint can play a role other than mechanical, however. An asterisk I have placed in the quotation highlights the shift to an implied objective/subjective opposition in the use of counterpoint, and a terminological conundrum that requires some teasing apart. When employed

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[29] "Crass, aber deutlich will ich die Schule des Contrapunctes mit der Schule jener absoluten, mechanischen Fingerfertigkeit vergleichen, die ein jeder reproducirende Künstler sich doch angeeignet haben muss, wenn er die Technik eines Kunstwerkes, die mechanische Technik, erfüllen soll. Aehnlich, wie durch die Schule der absoluten, mechanischen Fingerfertigkeit die zur Freiheit, Unabhängigkeit und Kraft erzogenen Finger in den Stand gesetzt werden, die mechanische Technik eines jeden Kunstwerkes zu erfüllen . . . wird auch durch die Schule des Contrapunctes die Phantasie befähigt, zahllose Charaktere und Wandlungen des Gedankens zu sehen, um schliesslich für den Stimmungskreis des zu schaffenden Kunstwerkes den zusagendsten Charakter zu bestimmen. In demselben Maasse aber, als der Stimmungskreis des Werkes subjectiv ist, ist in ihm alle contrapunctische Technik, die einmal unwiderruflich gewählte, subjectiv geworden. Darum meine ich, ist die Contrapunctik eines J.S. Bach eine tausendfach und herrlich eigenthümlich webende Seele seiner Kunstwerke, zwar gewonnen aus einer langen und strengen Schule seines Geistes und gewiss auch einer besonderen Naturanlage, aber, da sie in den Werken subjectiv erstanden, ist sie niemals mehr mit der vorausgegangenen Schulung zu verwechseln. Und man verwechselt Beide, wenn man seine contrapunktische Technik für eine blos mechanische hält. . . . Da man den weiten Geist Bach's im eigenen, engeren Geist nicht gut wohl begreifen mag, so nimmt man, nur selbst erlahmend, an, die Seele der Bach'schen Kunst sei auch dort erlahmt und zu einer mechanischen Formel geworden, wo die eigene Beseelung aufgehört hat." Schenker (1895); reprinted in Hellmut Federhofer, ed. (1990): 140, 141; trans. by Pastille (2007): 323.

'objectively' (Schenker does not introduce this word but the context implies it), counterpoint functions mechanically. Engaging his contrapuntal knowledge in the context of an exercise, the composer explores possibilities for tonal music generally. At that point when he fixes permanently the work's contrapuntal techniques within a specific musical context, the process ceases to be mechanical or objective. Instead, the composer's subjective input gives the completed musical work its particularity.

This understanding of subjectivity is significant, and problematic: it challenges the oppositions set forth in Table 1, where subjective falls on the side of mechanics. In the excerpt under discussion here, however, Schenker contrasts the mechanics of contrapuntal exercises with the counterpoint that belongs to the subjective, inspired work of art. In other words, he counts the subjective as something opposed to the mechanical. We can ameliorate the puzzlement by clarifying Schenker's two meanings of subjective. As employed in "Geist," subjective means particular or individual. In the context of the mechanical/organic opposition, however, subjective denotes failure on the part of the composer to produce an artwork whose meaning is universal in its communication, hence "objective." Schenker speaks to this distinction in the final volume of *Meisterwerk*:

> The work of art . . . is looked upon always as a subjective creation of the artist—this makes its recipients impatient with one another. Even when faced with the most subjective of Beethoven's music, however, this view is erroneous, for the genius in his work *is in fact objective enough* to preclude completely all intolerant, subjective critiques and theories based on feelings [emphasis added].[30]

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[30] Schenker (1997): 69. ["Das Kunstwerk . . . wird stets als eine nur subjective Schöpfung des Künstlers angesehen, das macht die Empfänger gegeneinander unduldsam. Selbst aber dem subjectivsten Beethoven gegenüber ist dieser Standpunkt falsch, denn in seinem Werk ist das Genie auch hinlänglich objektiv, um subjektivunduldsame Gefühlsurteile und Theorien völlig auszuschliessen." Schenker (1930): 105.] In "Schenker's Organicism Reexamined," Korsyn links Schenker's concern for objectivity to Schopenhauer's philosophy. Korsyn cites these excerpts from *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, where Schopenhauer writes: 1) "The gift of genius is nothing but the most complete objectivity"; 2) The *punctum saliens* of every beautiful work, every great and profound thought, is an

According to this formulation the masterwork is both subjective and objective: it bears subjective traits of the composer, the stamp of personal style (as discussed in "Geist"), but these traits in no way detract from his presenting "objective" (read universal) artistic truth. Attending to these multivalent meanings of subjective provide insight into Schenker's use of the term in "Geist," and demonstrates, I believe, not a case of Schenker's ignoring the oppositional categories he invokes but rather playing upon different meanings of a term situated within those categories.

Later in the essay Schenker shifts his focus away from the finished musical work and confronts directly the potential for the compositional process itself to be organic. His concern for organic process as an essential prerequisite for organic product is reminiscent of a nineteenth-century writer like Nottebohm, who summarized a core conviction of his time like this: "If we understand [a piece of music] as an organic formation, we must also assume that it came into being by organic means and that it developed from the inside outwards into a unified whole."[31] His discussion centers not on counterpoint but on composition more generally, and he offers two opposing models. The first, discussed by Pastille and Korsyn in their articles, resembles eighteenth-

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entirely objective perception. But such a perception is absolutely conditioned by a complete silencing of the will which leaves the person as pure subject of knowing. The aptitude for the prevalence of this state is simply genius"; and 3) ". . . objectivity, i.e., genius." ["[so] ist Genialität nichts Anderes, als die vollkommenste Objectivität. . . ." "Das *punctum saliens* jedes schönen Werkes, jedes grossen oder tiefen Gedankens, ist eine ganze objektive Anschauung. Eine solche aber ist durchaus durch das völlige Schweigen des Willens bedingt, welches den menschen als reines Subject des Erkennens übrig lässt. Die Anlage zum Vorwalten dieses Zustandes ist eben das Genie." "Objectivität, d.i. Genialität. . . ." Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, ed. Paul Deussen (Munich: R. Piper, 1924), 2 vols., 1: 218; 2: 422; 1: 233. Translated as *The World as Will and Representation* by E.F. J. Payne (New York: Dover, 1966), 2 vols., 1: 185, 2: 371; 1: 198. Cited in Korsyn (1993): 92, 93.]

[31] "Fassen wir es als eine organische Bildung auf, so müssen wir auch voraussetzen, dass es auf organischem Wege entstanden sei und sich von innen heraus zu einem einheitsvollen Ganzen entwickelt habe." Nottebohm (1865): 7. The translation is my own.

century aesthetic theories, where the artisan,[32] rather than the genius, plays a central role (see Table 1):

As a matter of fact, no musical content is organic. It lacks any principle of causation, and a contrived melody never has a determination so resolute that it can say, "only that particular melody, and none other, may follow me." Indeed, it is part of the work of shaping content for the composer to obtain from his imagination a variety of similarities and contrasts, in order ultimately to select his best option. Because he has selected only one option, we cannot know what other materials he had to choose from (the rejected options can often be elicited from his studies and sketches), but only the one that was most agreeable to him personally.[33]

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[32] Quotation from M.H. Abrams appears in footnote 25. Korsyn cites Nietzschean roots for the imagery. See Korsyn (1993): 99, 100.

[33] Schenker (2007): 328. ["In der That ist kein musikalischer Inhalt organisch. Es fehlt ihm ein jeglicher Causalnexus, und niemals hat eine erfundene Melodie darf mir folgen, eine andere nicht. Gehört es doch zu den Schmerzen des Inhaltsaufbaues, dass der Componist von seiner Phantasie sich mehrere Aehnlichkeiten und Contraste verschafft, um schliesslich die beste Wahl zu treffen. Durch die Wahl, die er so getroffen, erfährt man zwar nicht, was er sonst noch zur Auswahl vorräthig hatte (das Unterdrückte kann man oft aus seinen Studien und Skizzen erfahren), wohl aber, was ihm persönlich am besten gefiel." Schenker (1895): 148, 149.] Schenker mentions causality a number of times in the essay, an indicator of the central significance it held for him at this point in his career. In the essay's first section, titled "Melody," he writes: "But music, since it is fundamentally ignorant of causality or logic, may never represent a whole so convincingly that it can coerce everyone's sensibilities and allay the doubts of skeptical auditors" (320). [". . . die Musik, aber, die im Grunde Nichts von Causalität und Logik weiss, vermag ein Ganzes nie so darzustellen, dass es bindend für Jedermanns Gefühl wäre und das ungläubige Hören zwänge" (136). In Section IV, on Harmony, Schenker writes: "It seems to me, though, that harmony, however we conceive of it, performs an even more deeper, more necessary function: harmony helps music to deceive both itself and its listener about its lack of logic and causality..." (325). "Indessen scheint mir die Harmonie, in jeglichem Sinn verstanden, noch eine wesentlich tiefere Rolle zu spielen: sie hilft der Musik über den Mangel eiger Logik und eines Causalnexus sich selbst und den Zuhörer täuschen" (144). Finally, in Section V, titled "Moods, Forms, and the 'Organic,'" he argues, "The causality of life's events governs and disposes the moods of life, but musical representation of moods, unfamiliar with the tendency of ideas and experience to drag things earthward, area governed only by a deceptive appearance of life's causality" (329). "Die Stimmungen des Lebens

Schenker's description turns on two interdependent points: first, a purely musical notion of causation; and second, the composer's conscious choices at work in the creative process. Indeed, the fact of the composer's preferences determining which musical items to include in the final musical product precludes for Schenker an understanding of musical content as causally driven and, thus, organic.[34]

The second model Schenker presents, one implied by the first, allows for and includes an organic component:

> Nevertheless, I do recognise one phenomenon of the musical imagination to which the scientific sense of the "organic" seems to apply quite strictly. This is a phenomenon that can only be verified with great difficulty, *but I myself consider it to be a fact* [emphasis added] I find that the imagination, after it has generated a particular pattern, it is positively besieged by many patterns similar in nature, and that the influence of these similar patterns on the composer is often so irresistible that he includes them in the developing content without having become aware at all of their similarity.[35]

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beherrscht und ordnet die Causalität der Lebensereignisse, die Stimmungsbilder in der Musik aber, die nicht die erdwärts zerrende Schwere des Begriffs und der Erfahrung kennen, beherrscht nur den täuschende Schein einer Lebenscausalität (149).]

[34] As Kevin Korsyn has noted, Schenker's notion of causality concerns a necessary ordering in time of musical elements. See Korsyn 1988, 44-48. In "Geist" Schenker discusses causation in terms of melodic construction. Later in his career, Schenker argued that causality operates at multiple levels of musical structure. See discussion below, pp. 35, 36.

[35] Schenker (2007): 329. ["Indessen kenne ich eine Erscheinung in der musikalischen Phantasie, auf die der naturwissenschaftliche Begriff des 'Organischen' ganz streng zu passen scheint. Es ist das eine nur sehr schwer controlirbare Erscheinung, aber ich persönlich halte sie für eine Thatsache. So finde ich, dass die Phantasie, nachdem sie ein bestimmtes Gebilde hervorgebracht hat, von vielen Gebilden ähnlicher Natur förmlicher belagert ist, und es ist die Macht dieser ähnlichen Gebilde über den Componisten oft so unwiderstehlich, dass er sie in den zu bauenden Inhalt einschliesst, ohne sich deren Aehnlichkeit gar zum Bewusstsein geführt zu haben." Schenker, "Geist": 150.] Interestingly, both Korsyn and Pastille focus on the earlier of these quotations (the one given on p. 15) but do not consider this second one, in which Schenker admits an organic process of composition.

We encounter here a formulation consistent across Schenker's career—namely, that composing organically necessitates processes "uncontaminated by [the composer's] consciousness,"[36] processes separate from his mindful intention. While Schenker makes no reference to causality in this immediate context, his observation that in an organic scenario the composer's imagination works without his (consciously) recognizing the similarity of the patterns maintains the strictures of the earlier description.

The passages from "Geist" treated here highlight the interconnectedness of the mechanical and organic in Schenker's writing in this early period, and they serve as a foundation for the discussion which follows. They demonstrate, moreover, an early application of the mechanical/organic opposition to counterpoint, which Schenker believes operates both in the realm of the exercise (the mechanical) and the inspired musical work (the organic). Finally, the "Geist" excerpts point up Schenker's ambivalence concerning the relevance of organic models to the process of musical composition, a hesitance arising from his convictions that musical content lacks a purely musical causality, and that a composer whose creative activities consistently occur without conscious intervention does not (yet) exist.

In the decades following "Geist," Schenker's theoretical stance underwent deep-seated transformations.[37] Notably, the elements of organicism explicated in "Geist"—musical causality, composing without conscious intervention— remained largely intact for Schenker. His belief about whether or not these conditions obtained in music, however, changed radically. Schenker eventually

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[36] Schenker (2007): 329. [". . . so lange es vom Bewusstsein nicht befleckt worden. . ." Schenker (1895): 150.]

[37] Various categorizations for Schenker's publishing career are possible. For present purposes, and at the suggestion of William Rothstein, I recognize a three-fold division: (1) early writings, especially as represented by "Geist"; (2) middle writings, including *Harmonielehre* and the two volumes of *Kontrapunkt* in which Schenker is much occupied with the psychology of the listener; and (3) later writings (post 1920), in which Schenker has formulated the *Urlinie* concept and in which he is increasingly occupied with the genius artist. In this study I am concerned with ways in which the mechanical/organic opposition informs Schenker's theorizing across his career. As a result, I emphasize continuities rather than discontinuities.

defined a purely musical causality. In addition, he espoused a theory of composition in which the composer's conscious mind does not intervene. The opposition of mechanical and organic, meanwhile, continued as a significant and defining force in his writings. Concerning the terms machine/organism, rule/law, and artisan/genius, Schenker increasingly dramatized their unbridgeable opposition. Counterpoint, in contrast, continued to straddle opposing realms. As an exercise, Schenker describes it in mechanical terms;[38] as the conceptual foundation for free composition, (strict) counterpoint embodies the prized organic qualities of objectivity, law, and *Geist.*

III. Strict Counterpoint and Free Composition: Where (and How) Does Schenker Draw the Line?

That counterpoint remained central to Schenker's theoretical enterprise is clearly indicated by the working title he conceived for his multi-volume *Neue musikalische Theorien und Phantasien.* As late as 1922 Schenker advertised *Der freie Satz,* on the back leaf of *Kontrapunkt: Zweite Halbband* [=*Kontrapunkt II*], as *Neue musikalische Theorien und Phantasien, Band II³ Kontrapunkt Fortsetzung: Der freie Satz*

[38] See, for instance, his remark in *Counterpoint* I: "I have already discussed in the introduction how this rhythmic appearance, *demanded solely by the mechanics of exercises,* led to the illusion that they constituted a special and allegedly still valid genre of composition, namely 'strict composition'" [emphasis added]. In his criticisms of Riemann, Schenker attacks the notion that the pupil should, in the context of counterpoint exercises, "express the little melody in its best and most artistic form." Schenker contends that the exercise lacks the necessary context and scope to determine precisely its appropriate expression (8). Both quotations are from Schenker, Vol. I (1987): 18, 8. Additional references to *Counterpoint* I give page numbers for the English translation in parentheses in the main body of the text, with the abbreviation *CI.* ["Wie diese schon durch die Aufgabentechnik allein rein mechanisch geforderte rhythmische Erscheinung umgekehrt aber zur Illusion geführt hat, als hätte man es dabei gar mit einer besonderen und angeblich noch immer aktuellen Kompositionsgattung, nämlich der des „Strengen Satzes", zu tun, wurde bereits in der Einleitung dargelegt." "Kaum kann man es greller, als es mit diesen Worten geschieht, ausdrücken, dass der Kontrapunkt bereits selbst Komposition, und zwar im delikatesten Sinn des Wortes verstanden, zu betreiben habe. Man achte: der Schüler hat hier zu lernen, die kleine Melodie wirklich nur gerade aufs Beste, aufs Künstlericheste auszudrücken." Schenker (1910): 27, 12.]

(*In Vorbereitung*).[39] At this juncture in his publishing career Schenker construes *Der freie Satz* as essentially an extension of contrapuntal practice, even if it would depend heavily upon the notion of structurally significant scale degrees or *Stufen*. Notably, this argument for continuity between strict counterpoint and free composition retained its force through to Schenker's final publications. The published (posthumous) version of *Der freie Satz* devotes an entire chapter to strict counterpoint, for which Schenker provides this preface:

> Everything which has been said regarding the intrinsic properties of the intervals and the motion of the voices in my *Kontrapunkt*, volumes I and II, retains its validity in free composition.[40]

Both the title of Schenker's projected third volume of *Kontrapunkt* and this account from *Der freie Satz*, with their emphasis on supple boundaries between counterpoint and free composition, may well belie the fact that Schenker initially employed a two-pronged approach to the matter. Already in "Geist" he indicates a desire to clarify the relations among harmony, counterpoint and free composition:

> . . . I also hope to bring what are called the 'disciplines of harmony and counterpoint' into a welcome proximity with free composition, that is, to the actual life of music. And these disciplines, *once clarified*, would be able to explain the expressions of free composition, and to prepare students to express themselves, just as the grammar of language explains all verbal phenomena, both in art and in ordinary life.[41]

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[39] I am indebted to Richard Kramer for bringing this item to my attention.

[40] Schenker (1979): 55. Additional references to *Free Composition* give page numbers for the English translation in parentheses in the main body of the text, with the abbreviation *FC*. ["Alles was vom Wesen der Intervalle und von der Stimmenbewegung in meiner 'Kontrapunktlehre,' I und II, gesagt worden ist, behält auch im freien Satz seine Gültigkeit. . . ." Schenker (1956): 95.]

[41] Schenker (2007): 324. [". . . hoffe ich auch Das, was man „Schule der Harmonie und des Contrapunctes" nennt, in eine wünschenswerte Nähe des freien Schaffens, also des eigentlichen Lebens der Musik, zu bringen. Und die so erläuterte Schule könnte dann, ähnlich wie die Grammatik der Sprache alle

In his introduction to the first volume of *Kontrapunkt*, published in 1910, he plainly and forcefully spells out a narrower agenda, which excludes harmony: first, "at the outset to draw the boundaries between the *pure theory of voice leading* and *free composition*"; second, and more imperatively, "to reveal the *connection between counterpoint* (which may be considered the first musico-grammatical exercises) *and the actual work of art*—to show the nature and foundation of this connection. For," he contends, "there is indeed a relationship between counterpoint and composition, although it is far from what has been supposed by theorists of both the old and the new schools [emphasis original]."[42] Schenker thus revisits the topic explored in "Geist"—counterpoint in the exercise versus counterpoint in the completed musical work—and he resolves to investigate the matter systematically, and to clarify it once and for all.

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sprachlichen Erscheinungen in der Kunst und im normalen Leben gleichmässig erklärt, ebenso die Aeusserungen des freien Schaffens erklären, als auch auf sie vorbereiten." Schenker (1895): 142.]

[42] Schenker, Vol. I (1987): 10. [". . . zunächst die Sonderung der reinen Stimmführungslehre von dem freien Satz vorzunehmen." And, ". . . nämlich den Zusammenhang zwischen dem Kontrapunkt (als gleichsam den ersten musik-grammatischen Übungen) und dem wirklichen Kunstwerk zu offenbaren, zu zeigen, welcher Art er denn sei, und woraus er sich gründe. Denn es gibt in der Tat zwischen Kontrapunkt und Komposition einen Zusammenhang, wenn er auch weit davon entfernt ist, eine volle Identität beider vorzustellen, und daher eben auch ein völlig anderer ist als derjenige, den die Theoretiker der älteren wie der neueren Schule bisher vermutet haben." Schenker (1910): 15.] Schenker discusses aspects of the counterpoint/free composition distinction already in *Harmonielehre*. He does not, however, bring the same focus to the topic there as he does in *Kontrapunkt* I. Robert Snarrenberg's formulation in the *New Grove* article on Schenker provides valuable commentary: "The core of [Schenker's] theory is contained in the three volumes of *Neue musikalischen Theorien und Phantasien*, i: *Harmonielehre* (1906); ii: *Kontrapunkt* (bk 1, 1910; bk 2, 1922); and iii: *Der freie Satz* (1935). *Conceptually speaking*, the beginning of the set is *Kontrapunkt*, in which Schenker explicated the rules of the Fuxian species method and critiqued the formulations and explanations of Fux, Albrechtsberger, Cherubini and Bellermann [emphasis added]." See Snarrenberg (2001): 479. Other publications in which Schenker addresses the topic include: *J.S. Bach's Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue* (1909); *Erläuterungsausgabe*, Op. 110 (1914); *Freier Satz* (drafted in 1917, abandoned before 1922); *Der Tonwille*, Issue 1 (1921); *Kontrapunkt* II (1922, but begun earlier).

Table 2 summarizes principal characteristics by which Schenker differentiates counterpoint and free composition across his publishing career, in a manner analogous to the opposition of mechanical and organic. The table also records the significant means by which Schenker bridges the two realms: imputing to strict counterpoint basic laws and concepts rather than rules (and exceptions).

Table 2. Strict Counterpoint and Free Composition

Strict Counterpoint	Free Composition
based on the *cantus firmus*— real, corporeal	based on scale degrees (*Stufen*)— ideal, *geistig*
basic laws and concepts	prolongations of laws and concepts

Examining his use of these paired terms, primarily in the *Neue musikalische Theorien und Phantasien* and in the volumes of *Meisterwerk*, illustrates Schenker's two-pronged approach in action: he works both to separate counterpoint from free composition and to demonstrate connections between them. To wit, the ostensibly separate, ideal domain of the scale degrees, in the context of the passing tone, intrudes upon the real world of the *cantus firmus*; laws and concepts, meanwhile, operate on both sides of the compositional divide, appearing in their basic forms in strict counterpoint and then in prolonged forms in free composition. I consider the pairs in turn.

A. *Cantus Firmus* and *Stufen*

The *cantus firmus* supplies the foundation for the strict counterpoint exercise. Establishing the diatonic tonality of the exercise with its beginning and ending on the tonic pitch and stepwise approach to the final tonic, it also institutes a strict rhythmic procession that permits no deviations. In species that admit dissonance, resolutions occur within the space of one measure. The *cantus firmus* thus fixes musical events tonally, in one

key,[43] and rhythmically, in the space of one measure or, typically, two half-note beats.

Other defining characteristics of the *cantus firmus* include: first, it establishes the melodic, vocal basis of strict counterpoint. The *cantus firmus* thus avoids dissonant intervals or sums of intervals that produce tuning difficulties in singing.[44] The requirements of a melodic line, moreover—melodic fluency, a single climax—are primary for shaping the musical events in the exercise.[45] A second essential characteristic, and a point on which Schenker proved unyielding, is this: the *cantus firmus* is "nothing but an exercise" (*CI*: 20).[46] Thus, it must always be sharply differentiated from real melodies, such as a chorale, or from full-scale compositions. Further, constraints governing construction of the *cantus firmus* must be understood as answering requirements demanded solely by

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[43] Schenker's focus throughout the two volumes of *Kontrapunkt* lies with *cantus firmi* that remain in one key. I have, however, encountered two instances in which Schenker discusses modulation in the species exercise: at the ends of his sections on the *cantus firmus* (Schenker, *CI*: 101) and on first species counterpoint (Schenker, *CI*: 165-170).

[44] See Schenker, Vol. I (1987): 52: "Even though they are diatonic, some of these diatonic intervals are excluded in the cantus firmus: the augmented fourth (tritone), its inversion, the diminished fifth, as well as both sevenths. In other words, the melody of the cantus firmus therefore must be constructed only of seconds, thirds, perfect fourths and fifths, both kinds of sixths, and the perfect octave. The reason for this restriction is not only the dissonant character (together with its expressive consequences) of the intervals just cited, but also the difficulties of intonation attendant on them." ["Von diesen diatonischen Intervallen bleiben im C.f. aber ausgeschlossen, trotzdem sie diatonisch sind: die übermässige Quart (Tritonus), deren Umkehrung, d.i. die verminderte Quint, sowie beide Septen, so dass die Melodie des C.F. daher nur aus Sekunden, Terzen, der reinen Quart und Quint, aus beiden Sexten und der reinen Oktav gebaut werden darf. Der Grund dieses Verbotes ist nicht allein die Dissonanzhaftigkeit der eben gennanten Intervalle, samt deren Folgen für den Ausdruck, sondern auch die mit ihnen eigentümlich verbunden Intonationsschwierigkeit." Schenker (1910): 76.]

[45] I have summarized these features of the *cantus firmus* from Schenker's lengthy discussion in *CI*: 17-109. An important publication by William Pastille examines in detail the relationship of melodic fluency to the evolution of the concept of the *Urlinie*. See Pastille (1990).

[46] ". . . es [erscheint] mir dringend notwendig, der Erkenntnis endlich Bahn zu brechen, dass der C.f. wirklich nichts mehr als eine Aufgabe sein will. . . ." Schenker (1910): 30.

"the mechanics of exercises" (*CI*: 18)[47] and not carelessly be translated to free composition.

Stufen, or scale-steps, constitute a primary organizing principle for events in free composition. (Counterpoint is another.)[48]

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[47] "I have already discussed in the introduction how this rhythmic appearance, *demanded solely by the mechanics of exercises*, led to the illusion that they constituted a special and allegedly still valid genre of composition, namely 'strict composition'" [emphasis added]. In his criticisms of Riemann, Schenker attacks the notion that the pupil should, in the context of counterpoint exercises, "express the little melody in its best and most artistic form." Schenker contends that the exercise lacks the necessary context and scope to determine precisely its appropriate expression. Both quotations are from Schenker, Vol. I (1987): 18, 8. ["Wie diese schon durch die Aufgabentechnik allein rein mechanisch geforderte rhythmische Erscheinung umgekehrt aber zur Illusion geführt hat, als hätte man es dabei gar mit einer besonderen und angeblich noch immer aktuellen Kompositionsgattung, nämlich der des „Strengen Satzes", zu tun, wurde bereits in der Einleitung dargelegt." "Kaum kann man es greller, als es mit diesen Worten geschieht, ausdrücken, dass der Kontrapunkt bereits selbst Komposition, und zwar im delikatesten Sinn des Wortes verstanden, zu betreiben habe. Man achte: der Schüler hat hier zu lernen, die kleine Melodie wirklich nur gerade aufs Beste, aufs Künstlericheste auszudrücken." Schenker (1910): 27, 12.]

[48] It is difficult to define precisely the relative weight Schenker attributes to each within the context of free composition. While *Stufen* retain a central theoretical stronghold in Schenker's later writings, by the time of *Der freie Satz*, he attributes to them significant contrapuntal content in addition to their decisive harmonic grounding. In a brief conclusion to his discussion of paragraphs 53-78, he writes: "Of course, the descending fifths in the bass present the fifth *as verified by nature* [emphasis added]. But upon considering the results of §§ 56, 57, 59, 60, 63, 73, and 74, we find that such fifths are also a necessary outgrowth of voice-leading. Thus they combine in themselves a harmonic and a contrapuntal law. Schenker (1979): 34." ["Wenn wir die Ergebnisse der §§ 56, 57, 59, 60, 63, 73, 74 betrachten, bemerken wir, dass die Quintfälle des Basses nicht nur die durch die Natur beglaubigte Quint hervorkehren, sondern auch die Notwendigkeit der Stimmführung in sich tragen, dass sie somit ein *harmonisches* und *kontrapunktisches Gesetz* in sich vereinen." Schenker (1954): 69.] In addition, Schenker placed tremendous emphasis on the primary fifth-motion involving tonic and dominant. When discussing the *Stufen* in his chapter on specific foreground events, he writes: "Scale-degrees are present even in the fundamental structure itself. These degrees are the strongest of all, since the fundamental structure assures the coherence of the work." Schenker (1979): 111. ["Schon der Ursatz zeigt Stufen; diese Stufen sind die stärksten gemäss der Bedeutung des Ursatzes für den Zusammenhang, . . ." Schenker (1954): 173.] Of possible functions for other *Stufen*, Schenker cites two: (1) a chord that belongs to one of the cadences of the fundamental structure; (2) a chord that stands apart from a cadence. The consonance of the latter

Schenker's characterization of *Stufen* differs markedly from that of the *cantus firmus*, since he engages organic language in both metaphoric and metaphysical senses to describe them. With respect to metaphor, Schenker offers Nature as source for *Stufen*, and he draws comparisons between them and reproductive functions of the natural world. When discussing the centrality of the overtone series to the generation of pitches that comprise the major triad, for instance, Schenker invokes generational descent (from parent to child), and he appeals to "Nature's procreative urge" (*H*: 23, 24).[49] To account for the primacy of the fifth, Schenker claims that "the fifth enjoys among the overtones the right of primogeniture, so to speak" (*H*: 26).

Nature's aural canvas then supplies the foundation for tonal composition. Because Nature establishes the primacy of the fifth-relationship through the overtone series (G is the most potent overtone from C),[50] it is the fifth relationship that characterizes the motion of the *Stufen* (*H*: 29). In the second volume of *Kontrapunkt*,

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underscores "what was originally a voice-leading event, such as a neighboring note." Schenker (1979): 112. *Stufen* other than I or V thus fail to achieve status as independent tonal events in their own right. ["Entweder gehören die Klänge zu einer der Ursatzform-Kadenzen mit dem für sie charakterischen Anteil der kontrapunktisch-melodischen Führung, oder sie stehen trotz der Wirkung einer IV. oder VI. Stufe ausserhalb einer Kadenze und unterstreichen mit ihrer Konsonanz nur ein ursprünglich rein Stimmführungsgemässes wie etwa oft bei einer Nebennote." Schenker (1956): 174.]

[49] Schenker (1954): 23, 24. Additional references to *Harmony* give page numbers for the English translation in parentheses in the main body of the text, with the abbreviation *H*. ["Stellt sich mir nämlich, im Gegensatz zur Lehre vom Kontrapunkt, die Lehre von der Harmonie im ganzen als eine bloss geistige Welt dar, als eine Welt von ideell treibenden Kräften, seien es natur- oder kunstgeborene. . . ." Schenker (1906): v.] Robert Snarrenberg's "Competing Myths: The American Abandonment of Schenker's Organicism," focuses on Schenker's metaphors of birth and gestation and, especially, the tendency for American practitioners of Schenker to overlook them. See Snarrenberg (1994): 29-56.

[50] In this context Schenker declares G the most potent overtone from C. Strictly speaking C is, of course, the most potent overtone. In his discussion, however, Schenker ignores the octave overtone entirely. He wishes instead to clarify the relationship between the fifth and the third. Here, he argues, the fifth has precedence: the fifth results from the third division, the third from the fifth division of the overtone series. See Schenker (1954): 26.

invoking Nature again, Schenker writes that "scale degrees . . . have a course originally predetermined by [Nature] alone. . . ."[51]

In other settings Schenker presents harmony, the domain of *Stufen*, as a more mysterious phenomenon, removing it from the metaphoric world of procreation and placing it within the realm privileged by idealist philosophy, the *geistig* or ideal. In this manner, he draws in metaphysical aspects of the organic. In his introduction to *Harmonielehre*, for instance, Schenker claims that, "[I]n contrast to the theory of counterpoint, the theory of harmony presents itself to me as a purely *geistig* universe, a system of ideally moving forces . . ." (*H*: xxv).[52] In an aside to his discussion of first species in two voices, hinting at the function of *Stufen*, he writes:

> . . . free composition alone can dispense with an actual distinct extension in time of the organizing tone (such as is provided by the cantus firmus in the exercises of the later species) and posit *only ideal tones* [*nur ideelle Töne*] that can be expected to bear the burden of dissonances. Yet these ideal tones certainly are so present in our consciousness that they can . . . be described as real (*CI*: 112) [emphasis added].[53]

A significant ontological clarification concerning the *Stufen* remains yet. While in this context Schenker emphasizes non-corporeal aspects of the *Stufen*, in the opening chapters of *Harmonielehre* he argues for their derivation from naturally occurring acoustic (=corporeal) phenomena in the form of the overtone

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[51] Schenker (1987): 15. Additional references to *Counterpoint* II give page numbers for the English translation in parentheses in the main body of the text, with the abbreviation *C*II. ["Denn wie wir wissen, sind die Stufen mehr der Natur als der Kunst untertan; sie haben einen ursprünglich nur von der ersteren allein vorgeschriebenen gang, . . . " Schenker (1922): 17.]

[52] "Stellt sich mir nämlich, im Gegensatz zur Lehre vom Kontrapunkt, die Lehre von der Harmonie im ganzen als eine bloss geistige Welt dar, als eine Welt von ideell treibenden Kräften. . . ." Schenker (1906): v.

[53] I have made a small change to Rothgeb's translation. ["Erst der freie Satz vermag selbst auf ein wirkliches und deutliches Liegenbleiben des sammelnden Tones (wie es der C.f. bei den Aufgaben der späteren Gattungen ist) zu verzichten und auch nur ideelle Töne anzunehmen, denen das Tragen von Dissonanzen durchaus zugemutet werden kann. Doch freilich sind diese ideellen Töne so im Gefühl gegenwärtig, dass sie in diesem Sinne auch wieder als reell bezeichnet werden können." Schenker (1910): 154.]

series. Indeed, in *Harmonielehre* it is the overtone series upon which Schenker relies to assert the primacy of the fifth, the interval which defines the motion of the *Stufe*; and, he restricts the number of overtones relevant to tonal music according to that which can be perceived by the human ear.[54] In *Der freie Satz*, moreover, when introducing the *Ursatz*, he reiterates this conception, claiming that "The overtone series, this vertical sound of nature, . . . is condensed, abbreviated for the purposes of art."[55] The ideal (=non-corporeal) nature of the Stufen thus proves more complicated than the discussion from *Kontrapunkt I* might suggest. Invoking real, acoustic phenomena, perceivable by the human ear, in a proclaimed ideal realm, Schenker has—perhaps unwittingly in this context—rendered more permeable the boundaries between strict counterpoint and free composition. We revisit this propensity in the discussion immediately following.

1. Examples of *Cantus Firmus* and *Stufen* tones

Schenker's discussion of the passing tone in two voices supplies crucial data concerning the function of *cantus firmus* and *Stufen* tones in real and ideal realms, respectively. Examining his explication sets forth a significant component of the larger, two-pronged agenda, mapped out in his introduction to *Kontrapunkt I*. The first prong of the agenda—drawing boundaries between the

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[54] See, for instance, the discussion in Harmony, §11: "In reality, the artistic relation between the overtone series and our tonal system is as follows: The human ear can follow Nature as manifested to us in the overtone series only up to the major third as the ultimate limit; in other words, up to that overtone which results from the fifth division. This means that those overtones resulting from higher subdivisions are too complicated to be perceived by our ear...." (25). ["Die wirkliche künstlerische Beziehung zwischen der Obertonreihe und unsrem System ist vielmehr folgende: Das menschliche Ohr folgt der Natur, wie sie sich in der Obertonreihe offenbart, nur bis zur grossen Terz als der letzten Grenze, also bis zu jenem Oberton, dessen Teilungsprinzip fünf ist. Das will sagen, dass die Obertöne mit Teilungsprinzipien höherer Zahlen unsern Ohren bereits zu kompliziert sind. . . ." Schenker (1906): 37, 38.]

[55] Schenker (1979): 10. [... sie besteht in der Umwandlung des vertikalen Naturklanges, der ein gleichzeitiges Ereignis darstellt, in das Nacheinander einer horizontalen Brechung. . . . in diesem Sinn wird der Naturklang für den Gebrauch der Kunst zusammengezogen, abbreviiert." Schenker (1935): 39. Since the sentence structure of the English translation differs notably from that of Schenker's German original, I have included more of the German to provide a clearer context.]

"*pure theory of voice leading*" and "*free composition*"—will be evident most obviously in the ontological difference Schenker imputes to pitches of the *cantus firmus* and those of the *Stufen*: real and *geistig*, respectively. The second prong—revealing the "*connection between counterpoint . . . and the actual work of art*"—will show itself in the common processes Schenker posits in both counterpoint and free composition, specifically, the operation of the non-corporeal. Thus, even in the real, mechanical world of exercises, the passing tone will be seen to call forth the imaginary, and thereby point to *geistig* organic tones, whose realm is free composition.

Examples 1 and 2 reproduce Schenker's examples 88 and 89 from *Kontrapunkt* II.[56] Example 1 has two measures labeled 'a'; in each of these, passing motion occurs in the upper voice while the lower voice sustains. "That act of sustaining," writes Schenker, "alone prolongs in one's memory the sound of the consonant first interval, and all the more clearly so because all intervallic definitions are based on the lowest voice" (*CII*: 57).[57] The situation differs when the passing motion occurs in the lowest voice, as in the two measures labeled 'a'. Since the lower voice no longer provides an audible continuation of the consonant harmony established on the downbeat, Schenker suggests an alternative, our Example 2 and his Example 89, and explains:

> If, for the sake of greater clarity, we write at b the tone to be prolonged in a lower register—since it is purely *geistig* in nature, then we gain an insight into the true nature of the lower voice (to be presented more fully in free composition) . . . (*CII*: 57).[58]

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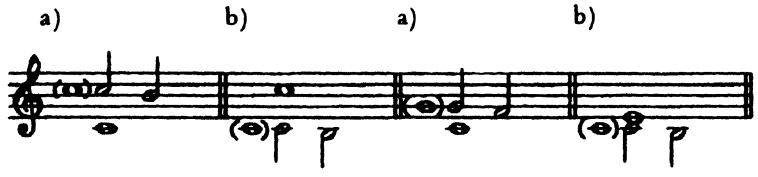
[56] John Rothgeb discusses these examples in his "Strict Counterpoint and Tonal Theory," but without reference to the philosophical implications of Schenker's language. See Rothgeb (1975): 268-270.

[57] ". . . Denn sofern bei a) der tiefere Ton liegen bleibt, trägt schon dessen Liegenbleiben allein die Erinnerung des ersten konsonanten Intervalles fort, und zwar um so deutlicher, als jegliche Bestimmung der Intervalle von der Tiefe aus geschieht. . . ." Schenker (1922): 58.

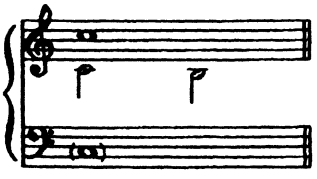
[58] "Verlegt man nun bei (b) bloss einer grösseren Verdeutlichung halber den fortzutragenden Ton, da er nun einmal rein geistiger Natur ist, besser noch in die Tiefe, so gewinnt man zugleich Einblick in das wahre, im freien Satze noch näher darzustellende Wesen der tieferen Aussenstimme, wie sie gegenüber dem noch

As a *geistig* lower voice, added for theoretical and conceptual clarity, the prolonged tone shares significant features with *Stufen* and free composition.[59] Here, however, Schenker presents essential features of it in the context of the species exercise.

Example 1. (Schenker's Ex. 88 from Kontrapunkt II*).*
The passing tone in two-voice counterpoint.



Example 2. (Schenker's Ex. 89 from Kontrapunkt II*).*
The passing tone in two-voice counterpoint, with "Stufe."



Schenker's ensuing commentary, which focuses less specifically on his Example 89 and more generally on the dissonant passing tone itself, supplies additional insight concerning the ontological status of such implied *geistig* tones and their function for the listener:

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tiefer gedachten Stufenton Bedeutung wieder nur einer Oberstimme erhält." Schenker (1922): 58, 59.

[59] To qualify as a *Stufe* the lowest voice would have to operate within the tonal system of seven *Stufen*. Additionally, it would lie "still lower" than the C^3 Schenker writes in parentheses.

Alongside all of the corporeality (which is always to be understood as independent) of the intervals available in strict counterpoint, the first appearance of the dissonant passing tone produces a curious suggestion of the *imaginary* [*Vorgestelltem*]: it consists in the mysterious active recollection [*wirkenden Erinnerung*] of the consonant point of departure that accompanies the dissonant passing tone on its journey through the third-space. It is as though the dissonance would always carry along with it the impression of its consonant origin . . . [emphasis added] (*CII*: 57, 58).[60]

Here again Schenker, in the context of the corporeality of the species, posits an intrusion of the non-corporeal. In this case it is the imaginary, working via the process of active memory, whose function it is to retain the consonant point of departure, just as did the *geistig* pitch of his Example 89. A significant distinction must, however, be noted: the *geistig* pitch that belongs to free composition has never sounded and thus has no corporeal existence, past or present. A process engaging the imagination, however, keeps alive, as it were, a pitch which has sounded. This latter process thus constitutes an act of memory.

Interestingly, in this setting Schenker does not clarify the relative priority of the imaginary and the *geistig*. For present purposes it seems advisable to focus on the fact of the non-corporeal emerging within the corporeal discipline of the species. Implicating both memory and the imagination seems then a first step in the process of moving from corporeal to non-corporeal, with the *geistig* tone of Example 89 standing at a greater distance yet. In this way, Schenker advances his larger agenda of demonstrating connections between strict counterpoint and free composition: within the species exercise, we witness both the procedures and devices of free composition. Significantly for the

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[60] "Bei aller der stets als unabhängig zu verstehenden Körperlichkeit der im strengen Satze möglichen Intervalle enthüllt sich somit bei der Urerscheinung des dissonanten Durchganges gleichwohl schon ein seltsamer Einschlag von Vorgestelltem: er besteht in der geheimnisvoll wirkenden Erinnerung an den konsonanten Ausgangspunkt, die den dissonanten Durchgang auf seinem Weg durch den Terzraum begleitet. Es ist, als würde die Dissonanz auch den Einschlag der Ausgangskonsonanz stets mit sich führen. . . ." Schenker (1922): 59. Rothgeb's translation gives *wirkenden Erinnerung* as "covert retention, by the ear."

present article, we see the softening of the boundaries between strict counterpoint and free composition, a pointed instance of their more porous nature.

B. Basic Laws and Concepts versus Prolongations

In many of his writings, and especially in the two volumes of *Kontrapunkt*, Schenker distinguishes basic laws from prolongations of such laws as a means to differentiate strict counterpoint from free composition. At the same time, Schenker effects a far-reaching transformation: the historical opposition rules-versus-laws (Table 1)[61] becomes Schenker's own laws-versus-prolongations (Table 2). It is noteworthy that while the former sharply demarcates its terms, the latter, as will be demonstrated shortly, proposes continuity. Implications for the status of counterpoint in Schenker's theory and for his transformation of the mechanical/organic opposition to his own theoretical ends are nothing less than profound.

Prior to Schenker's in-depth treatment of counterpoint, writers commonly treated the species as a rule-based discipline. Fux (alias Aloysius), in his introductory conversation with Josephus, for instance, defines counterpoint like this: ". . . a composition which is written strictly according to technical rules."[62] The rule-based framework can bring with it frequent invocations of exceptions, a theoretical point which proved disturbing for Schenker. Citing a passage from Albrechtsberger's *Gründliche Anweisung*, Schenker draws attention to his predecessor's error. Albrechtsberger, Schenker complains, spells out a rule only to invoke an exception in the sentence immediately following: "In strict composition, two notes of the same letter-name . . . are not permitted in succession in a single measure. . . . This rule, however, has two exceptions . . ." (*CI*: 3).[63]

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[61] I discuss sources for this opposition on pp. 33-35.

[62] Johann Joseph Fux (1725): 23. Fux's qualification of rules as "technical" reinforces the dichotomies of the mechanical/organic opposition (see Table 1).

[63] "Auch sind im strengen Satze two Noten von einerley buchstaben als c c, d d, gleich nach einander. . . . Doch hat diese Regel wiederum zwei Ausnahmen. . . ." Schenker (1910): 5.

In the *Meisterwerk* essay "Das Organische der Fuge," published in 1926, Schenker critiques Marpurg's landmark *Abhandlung von der Fuge* (1753-4). The discussion has shifted from strict counterpoint to fugue, the latter a form of free composition in Schenker's theoretical universe. Even so, Schenker rails against Marpurg, as he did against Albrechtsberger, for relying upon a framework of rules-and-exceptions:

> Quite in the manner of the early theorists, [Marpurg] sets these up as case-by-case foreground *rules* with case-by-case *exceptions*. He still has no idea of a background, which alone can breathe true life into a fugue so that, like all forms of life, it has *a necessary course*—a fugue dictated by background *laws* that have nothing to do with existing foreground *rules and exceptions* [emphasis added].[64]

Schenker opposes the rules-and-exceptions framework on several grounds. First, he criticizes his predecessor's failure to grasp what for Schenker is the music's essence: the background, *from which originate musical laws*. Marpurg's failing then is not merely semantic but conceptual. Second, in this context, Schenker claims the background as the *source of life* for the fugue—surely a pivotal claim in developing an argument for music's being organic. The absence of background in the rules-and-exceptions framework must thus be regarded as nothing less than fatal! Third, the rules-and-exceptions framework cannot impart to the fugue *a necessary course*, a compulsion for musical events to occur in a particular order. Finally, the rules-and-exceptions construction produces a disquieting narrative of the relationship between strict counterpoint and free composition, one which Schenker spells out in *Kontrapunkt* I when he attacks Cherubini for failing to understand "the mission of contrapuntal teaching":

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[64] Schenker (1996b): 32. ["[Er] stellt auch die eigenen Grundsätze wieder ganz in der Art der Alten auf, d.h. nur als fallweise Vordergrundregeln mit fallweisen Ausnahmen—er ahnt noch nichts von jenem Hintergrund, der allein auch der Fuge wahres Leben spendet, notwending so verlaufend, wie alles übrige Leben, und von hinter gründigen Gesetzen beherrscht, die mit den überkommenen Vordergrundregeln und Ausnahmen nichts zu schaffen habe. . . ." Schenker (1926b): 58.]

Is this rule of counterpoint—the prohibition of one or another interval—supposed to be binding also on free composition, or is it the task of contrapuntal theory merely to provide an initial approach to the problem? Is everything written after those earliest epochs to be ascribed only to "exceptions" and violations of allegedly inviolable "rules of composition"—in other words, to be regarded only as *badly written*? (*CI*: 75).[65]

In Schenker's summary of Cherubini, uncritically applying the *rules* of counterpoint to free composition brings an intuitively nonsensical conclusion: most of the music we know and admire is badly written.

It is not difficult to imagine Schenker's discomfort with such an account. He was himself deeply committed to the repertoire under discussion and loathe to examine it within a system that produced what was for him a preposterous theoretical deduction. Schenker proposes a solution to the impasse later in *Kontrapunkt* I: a new purpose for contrapuntal study, and a new account of its relationship to free composition:

One sees, then, how one and the same basic phenomenon [*Urphänomen*] manifests itself in so many forms, yet without completely losing its identity in any of them! However much a given variant may conceal the basic type [*Urtypus*], it is still the latter alone that occasions and fructifies the new manifestation. But to reveal the basic type together with its variants, and [thereby] to uncover only prolongations of a fundamental law [*Urgesetz*], even where apparent contradictions hold sway—this alone is the task of counterpoint! (*CI*: 241).[66]

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[65] "Soll diese Regel des Kontrapunkts, d.i. das Verbot von diesem oder jenem Intervall, noch immer auch den freien Satz binden, oder ist es Aufgabe der Kontrapunktslehre, bloss erst das Problem zu eröffnen? Sollte alles, was seit jenen ältesten Zeiten komponiert wurde, wirklich nur auf „Ausnahmen" und Verstössen wider eine angeblich unumstössliche „Komponsitionsregel" beruhen, im Grunde also nur—schlecht geschrieben sein?" Schenker (1910): 105.

[66] Rothgeb translates *Urtypus* as basic form; I have changed it to basic type. ["Man sieht also, wie ein und dasselbe Urphänomen in so vielen Formen sich manifestiert und doch in keiner von ihnen sich ganz verliert! Will nun auch fürs erste die jeweilige Abwandlung noch so wenig den Urtypus erkennen lassen, gleichwohl ist es der letztere allein, der auch die neue Erscheinung zeitigt und befruchtet. Gerade aber den Urtypus samt dessen Abwandlungen aufzuzeigen, und eben nur Prolongationen eines Urgesetzes zu enthüllen, auch dort, wo scheinbar

Key terms in this excerpt, which Schenker uses synonymously, include basic/fundamental law, phenomenon, and type.[67] According to Schenker, all are present in strict counterpoint and all appear in free composition *in prolonged form*.[68] Most significantly for present purposes, Schenker's narrative replaces the rule-based framework, a feature of mechanics, with laws, a feature of the organic.[69] Schenker thus assigns to strict counterpoint the duty of explicating laws in their most basic form. In this way he dispenses with rules all together. To understand the foundational nature of this transformation and the import it held for Schenker's theories, we need to know something of the history of rules and laws.

1. Rules versus Laws

An influential instance of the rule/law distinction comes in the early nineteenth century literary criticism of August Wilhelm von Schlegel. In his twenty-second Vienna lecture (1808),[70] which compares the English and Spanish theatre traditions, Schlegel opposes mechanical and organic unities, denigrating the former

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Widersprüche gegen dieses zu Tage treten, ist allein Aufgabe des Kontrapunktes!" Schenker (1910): 315.]

[67] These are terms Pastille associates with the writings of Goethe. See Pastille (1985): 73-138.

[68] I discuss examples of prolongation from Schenker's writings on pp. 37-40; 43-45.

[69] Schenker's preference for laws can be accounted for in a number of contexts. Most obvious in the framework of organicism is late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century application of natural laws to art. Thus, for instance, Goethe, in the *Italienische Reise* (1787), writes that ". . . these high works of art are also the highest works of nature, created by men following true and natural laws." ["Diese hohen Kunstwerke sind zugleich als die höchsten Naturwerke von Menschen nach wahren und natürlichen Gesetzen hervorgebracht worden. *Goethes Werke*, Vol. 11 (1982): 395. The translation is my own.] Schenker's preference for laws is, however, considerably more complex than this reference suggests. See, for instance, Wayne Alpern's "Music Theory as a Mode of Law: The Case of Heinrich Schenker, Esq." (1999): 1459-1511 for an excellent discussion of Schenker's legal education and its ramifications for Schenker's theorizing about music.

[70] Schlegel's 1808 Vienna lectures were published in 1809-11 as *Über dramatische Kunst und Literatur*.

because they depend upon rules.[71] When he demonstrates in Shakespeare's works the presence of the valued organic unities that result from the operation of laws, Schlegel confers upon the playwright the early nineteenth-century's foremost stamp of approval.

Late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century philosophical discourse was similarly focused on the opposition of rules [*Regeln*] and laws [*Gesetze*].[72] Kant's concept of law distinguishes theoretical laws from rules and practical laws from rules and counsels. To convert a theoretical *rule* of relation into a *law* in Kant's system, the rule must be phrased in terms of causality. Thus, the rule "if the sun shines long enough upon a body it grows warm," phrased in terms of causality, becomes the law "the sun is by its light the cause of heat." Kant premised his critical philosophy upon a general concept of law "characterized by objective universality and necessity."[73] Features of Kant's philosophy significant for this discussion include his distinction between rules and laws, and his invocation of necessity and causality as features of laws.

For Hegel, a rule differs from a law in that a rule admits exceptions ('As a rule . . .'). 'Rule' involves undifferentiated uniformity; hence, regularity, which is closely related to symmetry. Regularity obtains in a series of parallel lines of equal length. 'Law', on the other hand, consists in a necessary connection between distinct features. Lawfulness is evident, for instance, "in the irregular orbits of the planets." For Hegel, regularity has a place in certain of the arts but he regards it as "aesthetically inferior to lawfulness."[74]

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[71] Summarized in James Benziger (1951): 36, 37.

[72] Wayne Alpern also discusses the importance of Kant's and Hegel's legal philosophy to Schenker's theorizing. See Alpern (1999): 1477-1479. Kevin Korsyn's "Schenker's Kantian Epistemology" is devoted entirely to Kantian terminology in Schenker's theorizing.

[73] Immanuel Kant, on "Laws," in Howard Caygill (1995): 275. The example of a rule transformed into a law is from Kant's *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* (1783).

[74] Hegel, on "Law, rule," in Michael Inwood (1992): 160, 161. Inwood draws the distinction between regularity and lawfulness from Hegel's *Lectures on Aesthetics* (1823, 1826, 1828-9).

Terms central to Kant's and Hegel's definitions of law—necessity and causality, in combination with a privileging of aesthetic lawfulness—circulate in many of Schenker's writings. In the quotation from "Das Organische der Fuge" cited above (p. 29), we observe Schenker championing a fugue that, like all forms of life, has "a necessary course." In the same context, Schenker argues for the aesthetic superiority of the lawfulness uncovered by his own theoretical methods over the rules-and-exceptions posited by Marpurg.

An issue with which Schenker grappled for several decades was the relative degree of causality present from the simplest two-voice exercise in strict counterpoint to free composition.[75] In "Geist," we recall, Schenker argued that musical content cannot be organic because it lacks causality. As his career progressed, however, he grew increasingly certain of a purely musical causality and, therewith, a defensible argument for an organic accounting of music. Notably, for Schenker this causality obtains not in melodic construction isolated from other musical processes but rather in the interaction of voices in a contrapuntal setting and, more precisely, in the treatment of dissonance. To wit, when discussing fourth-species counterpoint in the first volume of *Kontrapunkt* (1910), Schenker notes: ". . . it is prudent to find precisely in the dissonant syncope a *technical means* of establishing a purely musical causality . . . [emphasis added] (*CI*: 291)."[76] Carrying forward the hesitation expressed in "Geist," he adds that the "*compulsion* to prepare and resolve a dissonance" provides for the artist "a most welcome means of feigning a kind of musical causality and necessity at least from harmony to harmony" [emphasis original]

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[75] Korsyn relates Schenker's concern with causality to Kantian philosophy in Korsyn (1988): 44-56. In "Schenker's Organicism Reexamined," Korsyn draws connections between Schenker's language and that of Wagner who, in a number of publications, expressed reservations about the relevance of organic models for musical explanation, in large part because of the lack of necessity he (Wagner) perceived in absolute music. See Korsyn (1993): 104-109.

[76] "Will man dem verborgenen Sinn der Entwicklungsgeschichte unserer Kunst näherkommen, so empfiehlt es sich, gerade in der dissonanten Synkope ein technisches Mittel rein musikalischer Kausalität zu sehen. . . ." Schenker (1910): 376.

(*CI*: 291).[77] Schenker revisits the topic of causality in his explanatory edition of Beethoven's Op. 111, published in 1915. Here he extends the concept beyond the note-to-note connections outlined in *Kontrapunkt* I and posits instead a causality spanning the entire introduction of the sonata and engaging multiple musical parameters:

> What a colossal amount of tonal necessities, that is specifically musical causality, all of these factors (scale-degrees, thematic connection, continuous melodic line) have stored up in themselves, can consequently be easily grasped.[78]

Finally, causality counts as a central concern of *Freier Satz*, the draft for *Der freie Satz* that Schenker abandoned before 1922. In his 1917 version, musical causality is no longer merely technical, as in the syncope. Instead it possesses both logic and a living quality, the latter qualifying it unequivocally as organic:

> Under causality one has to imagine a drive, a compulsion, which legitimizes the tone as a living, logically thinking being, as it were, therefore as a logical motor like the one we grant analogously to our language.[79]

As if summing up the entire project, Schenker titles the final chapter of the draft "*Von der musikalischen Kausalität: Rückblick und Epilog.*"[80]

Claiming a lawful basis for counterpoint had far-reaching consequences for Schenker's theories. Having inherited a

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[77] "Auch in dieser, ja selbst in der vorgeschrittensten, erscheinen die Harmonien desto inniger, scheinbar notwendiger verkettet. . . ." Schenker (1910): 377.

[78] Translation by Korsyn (1988): 53. ["Welch ungeheure Summe von tonlichen Notwendigkeiten, das ist spezifisch musikalischer Kausalität all diese Momente (Stufen, thematische Zusammenhang, fortlaufende melodische Linie) in sich nun aufgespeichert haben, lässt sich demnach wohl leicht begreifen." Schenker (1915): 6.]

[79] The Oster Collection: 51/1378. Translation from Snarrenberg (1997): 107. I am grateful to William Rothstein for drawing this source to my attention.

[80] Korsyn speculates as to why causality does not figure significantly in *Der freie Satz*, and concludes that this culminating text "implicitly concerns causality. The possibility of transforming a dissonance into a consonance at a later level guarantees that even the fundamental structure exhibits musical causality, since the $\hat{2}$ is a passing tone that creates a need for resolution." See Korsyn (1998): 54.

theoretical tradition that failed to define systematically the boundaries between counterpoint and free composition, in his introduction to *Kontrapunkt* I Schenker sets as his first agenda item the defining of these boundaries. His second agenda item demands that he demonstrate connections between the two. It is at this juncture that laws (and concepts) make their signal contribution. Demonstrated first in counterpoint, Schenker argues that the force of these laws holds in free composition, albeit in prolonged form. In positing prolongations rather than exceptions, Schenker achieves more than a semantic gain: prolongations support his argument for the continuity between counterpoint and free composition. At the same time, the theory of prolongations directs attention to the interpretive character of laws, the necessity to elucidate in particular situations the relevance or applicability of a law. As in a society's legal system, laws exist on the books and yet require interpretation for individual cases. The music analyst must similarly operate as a judge, whose role it is to apply the action of tonal laws in realms both real and *geistig*.[81] Finally, with his critical reformulation of the historic opposition rules-versus-laws, Schenker dispenses with rules altogether. In this way, the species shed one aspect of their mechanical origin and garner a home in the realm of the organic.

(a) Examples of Prolongation with Respect to Laws

The passing tone in two of its prolonged versions exemplifies Schenker's notion that laws uncovered in strict counterpoint continue to operate in the greater time spans and musical complexities of free composition. First introduced in the space of three beats, the dissonant passing tone expands in Schenker's theory to include passages occupying two bars (an instance of tying from a dissonance)[82] and, eventually, to entire sections of works in free composition. One aspect of the expansion occurs in time. The second-theme area of a sonata form, typically represented by

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[81] Wayne Alpern notes that some writers have shied away from investigating Schenker's legal education, in part because "music scholars untrained in the law have tended to exaggerate its rigidity and thus failed to accurately assess the influence of Schenker's legal education upon his musical development." See Alpern (1999): 1467.

[82] Schenker, Vol. II (1987): Example 381 on p. 258.

melodic scale-degree 2 ($\hat{2}$) in combination with scale-step motion to V, supplies a familiar example of such an expansion.[83] Schenker's figure 154/1 (Example 3), an analytic example interpreting the first movement of Mozart's Piano Sonata in C Major, K. 279, charts the course of musical events through the first thirty-one measures.[84]

Schenker begins the *Urlinie* descent on $\hat{3}$ (E^5), and extends the pitch class through the first tonal area and transition of the sonata-form exposition. The passing tone $\hat{2}$, whose appropriate supporting harmony arrives at m. 20, constitutes the primary melodic event of the second tonal area. Though neither of these pitches is literally present in the music for the duration indicated by Schenker's sketch (mm. 1-16 and 17-31, respectively), as one of the tones of the *Urlinie* the second scale degree manifests a *geistig* or conceptual presence through the duration of the second theme. In this setting, then, the passing tone vastly extends the half-measure allotment accorded it in the second-species exercise.

Schenker expands the passing tone in tonal space as well. Already in *Kontrapunkt* I he claims that free composition "emancipates the passing dissonance from the postulate of the second" (*CI*: 184).[85] In the second volume of *Meisterwerk*, in the essay "Further Consideration of the Urlinie II (1926)," Schenker details the prolongation of the law of the passing tone from spans belonging to strict counterpoint—the third and fourth—to the linear progressions of free composition which, though greater in

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[83] In *Free Composition*, Schenker affirms the passing-tone status of scale-degree 2 within the context of an interruption structure when discussing specific characteristics of the middleground. In his §91 he writes: "Since it is associated with the fundamental structure, the first $\hat{2}$ remains true to the law of the passing tone within the space of a third; it never takes on the character of a lower neighboring note. The passing tone and neighboring tone are entirely different concepts." Schenker (1979): 37. ["Auf Grund der Fühlungsnahme mit dem Ursatz bleibt die erste $\hat{2}$ dem Gesetz des Durchganges im Terzraum treu und begibt sich dadurch des Charakters einer tieferen Nebennote von vornherein: D u r c h g a n g und N e b e n n o t e sind ganz v e r s c h i e d e n e B e g r i f f e." Schenker (1956): 72.]

[84] For this example, I refer the reader to *Der freie Satz*. Schenker's commentary appears on p. 154 of the texted volume.

[85] "Was den freien Satz anbelangt, so emanzipiert er die durchgehende Dissonanz zunächst vom Postulat der Sekund. . . . " Schenker (1910): 248.

length, derive yet from the law of the dissonant passing note: "fifth- and sixth-progressions (a sixth-progression is an inversion of the third-progression), seventh- and ninth-progressions representing steps of a second and descending register transfer expressed as octave-progressions. . . ." He comments that "free composition prolongs with the greatest freedom the law of retention of the primary note," and that, in all instances of a linear progression, "the primary note is to be retained until the point at which the concluding note appears."[86]

These examples contribute significant details to Schenker's theory of the passing tone, as well as to his tonal theories generally. First, they demonstrate Schenker's efforts to maintain continuity between principles of strict counterpoint and those of free composition. In both the sonata-form movement and the passing motion spanning the interval of a ninth, the primary note is retained *geistig* until the concluding note appears. Second, the examples and their accompanying explanations argue for laws and *geistig* tones as essential components that underlie free composition. Schenker begins the second *Urlinie* essay like this:

> The *geistig* unity of a linear progression signifies a *geistig* tension between the beginning and end of the progression. . . . This tension alone engenders musical coherence.[87]

In a two-voice framework, species counterpoint depends upon aural retention (with help from the imagination and memory) of the initiating *cantus firmus* pitch in a passing-tone setting, whether

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[86] Schenker (1996a): 10, 1. ["Mit grösster Freiheit prolongiert der freie Satz das Gesetz vom Festhalten des Kopftones, . . .;" "Der freie Satz fügt den vom strengen Satz übernommenen Zügen im Terz- und Quartraum prolongierend nun auch noch Quint- und Sextzüge (Sextzug=Terzzug in Umkehrung), Sept- und Nonenzüge für Sekundschrittte, Höher- und Tieferlegungen in Oktavzügen hinzu. Die Füllung dieser Züge geschieht mittels Durchgängen, die nun einen freieren Satz führen;" and ". . . ist doch der Kopfton des Zuges so lange fortzutragen, bis der Endton erscheint." Schenker (1926a): 26, 11.]

[87] Schenker (1996a): 1. ["Die geistige Einheit eines Auskomponierungszuges bedeutet eine geistige Spannung zwischen Anfang und Ende des Zuges: ist doch der Kopfton des Zuges so lange fortzutragen, bis der Endton erscheint. Diese Spannung allein schafft den musikalischen Zusammenhang. . . ." Schenker (1926a): 11.] Rothgeb translates "geistige" as "conceptual."

the counterpoint appears in the upper or the lower voice; free composition, conversely, requires *geistig* (spiritual or mental) retention of the *Stufe* or *Urlinie* tones. Acoustical realities (physical, corporeal), sufficient for the *cantus firmus* pitches of the counterpoint exercise which restrict passing-tone dissonances to just one beat, do not maintain their force in the prolonged time- and interval spans of free composition.

2. Concepts

Closely related in function to laws are musical constructions Schenker calls concepts (*Begriffen*). Their significance for the present inquiry concerns the immutability they share with laws and the interpretive potential they offer to invoke prolongations rather than exceptions. Thus, in the examples provided below we observe Schenker arguing that concepts retain their purity in contexts where the music's literal sounding details would, in older theoretical frameworks, call forth the language of exceptions.

The philosophical origin of concepts and its equivalents lies in Socratic-Platonic philosophy, the most familiar expression coming down to us from ancient Greek philosophy being "Idea."[88] Philosophers from Plato through to Locke and Leibniz adopted one of two principal stances with respect to Ideas: first, the mind has innate ideas, present without having been derived from previous experience; and second, the mind's ideas are imprinted through experience. In the seventeenth century, philosophers frequently divided the human subject into faculties of sensibility and intellect, and they took one of two stances in bringing together "sense data and intellectual ideas": rationalists derived sensibility from ideas; empiricists derived ideas from sensibility.[89] A significant terminological development came in the philosophy of Leibniz (1646-1716). Deliberately departing from the imagistic implications of the term "ideas," Leibniz substituted the German

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[88] My discussion of concepts is based on these sources: J. Mittelstrass, "Begriff," in Joachim Ritter, ed. (1971): Cols. 780-785; "Innate ideas," "Ideas" (both articles by Harold I. Brown), "Concept" (by Bede Rundle), in Ted Honderich, ed. (1995): 409-410; 389-90; 146; "Concept," in Caygill (1995): 118-121; and "Concept," in Inwood (1992): 58-61.

[89] Caygill (1995): 119.

Begriff, which translates the past participle of the Latin verb *concipere*: "to take to oneself, to take and hold."

Kant included both types of concepts: "derived or 'empirical' concepts, . . . drawn from experience by means of comparison, reflection, and abstraction . . . ; and basic or 'pure' concepts, . . . not abstracted from experience and 'investigated by metaphysics.'"[90] A lingering problem that remained for Kant concerned intuition, specifically, the relation of intuitions to the pure concepts. Borrowing language from Aristotelian formulations newly resuscitated by A.G. Baumgarten in the 1730s, Kant, in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, adopted the position that concepts (*noeta*) anticipate the shape in which intuitions (*aestheta*) are presented to the understanding.[91] Nineteenth-century philosophers of art put an especially provocative spin on this issue, with writers like Schlegel and Coleridge arguing forcefully for the innate knowledge of concepts. They argued further that the mind of the artist "is a mirror of the Divine Mind,"[92] thereby furthering in the nineteenth century's cult of the artistic genius.

How does Schenker's treatment of concepts fit within this checkered terminological history? In *Harmonielehre*, Schenker describes a *Stufe* as a "higher and more abstract unity" than the triad, an entity that may "comprise several harmonies, . . . [all of which] would be subsumed *under the concept of* this triad on C as a scale-step [emphasis added]" (*H*: 139).[93] His discussion of Nature and the artist in *Harmonielehre* is also instructive. For Schenker, Nature is the source of the concepts he terms *Stufen* (see above, pp. 23, 24). Leading up to his explication of *Stufen*, Schenker clarifies Nature's (limited) role in the development of the tonal system, and he posits Nature as the source into which the artist instinctually taps:

> Nature's help to music consisted of nothing but a hint, a counsel forever mute. . . . No one could exaggerate, hence, the admiration and gratitude we owe to *the*

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[90] Caygill (1995): 120.

[91] Caygill (1995): 119, 120.

[92] Benziger (1951): 37.

[93] ["Denn die Stufe bildet eine höhere abstrakte Einheit, so dass sie zuweilen mehrere Harmonien konsumiert. . . . um derentwillen sie dann alle unter den Begriff eben des Dreiklanges auf C, als einer Stufe, subsumiert werden müssen." Schenker (1906): 181.] Borgese gives "Einheit" as unit; I have changed it to unity.

intuitive power with which the artists have divined Nature. . . . This hint, then, was dropped by Nature in the form of the so-called "overtone series." This much-discussed phenomenon, which constitutes Nature's only source for music to draw upon, *is much more familiar to the instinct of the artist than to his consciousness* [emphasis added] (*H*: 20).[94]

Schenker's description shows his affinity with nineteenth-century writers such as Schlegel and Coleridge. Like them, he attributes to artists a special predilection for natural/artistic truth.[95] Also in keeping with nineteenth-century proclivities, Schenker locates this capacity outside of the artist's consciousness, ascribing it variably to "instinct" or to "intuitive power." Schenker does not adopt unequivocally, however, the stance of the "innate ideas" theorists. The concepts to which his artists gain access reside not in their own minds but instead must be accessed through a special communion with Nature. Further, the two volumes of counterpoint emphasize powerfully the educational component necessary for grasping and applying such concepts in musical situations.[96] Thus Schenker occupies a philosophical middleground

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[94] "Sie ist nichts mehr als ein Wink, ein ewig stummer Rat. . . . Daher die Kraft der Intuition, mit der die Künstler hier die Natur errieten, nicht hoch, nicht dankbar genug anzuerkennen und zu bewundern ist. . . . Ihren Wink aber deponierte die Natur in der sogenannten Obertonreihe. Diese vielgenannte Naturerscheinung, welche so die einzige Quelle der Natur bildet, woraus die Musik schöpft, ist seltsamerweise dem Instinkt der Künstler vertrauter als ihrem Bewusstsein. . . ." Schenker (1906): 32, 33.

[95] Schenker returns to this theme numerous times in his later writings. In the *Meisterwerk* essays, for instance, he became increasingly preoccupied with the person of the genius whose "inner gaze is directed ever upwards, towards the Creator, and towards those endowed by Him who fashions their works as if in His name." Schenker (1997): 69. [Der innere Blick des Genies ist immer aufwärts gerichtet: zum Schöpfer und zu den von Ihm Begnadeten, die gleichsam in Seinem Namen schaffend wirken." Schenker (1930): 105.] A small but significant change has taken place in Schenker's thought: he speaks here not of Nature but of God. This religious dimension is especially significant for Schenker's later writings.

[96] The following, from Schenker's introduction to *Counterpoint* I, illustrates: "It should be obvious that such a training of the ear for artistic purposes . . . is indispensable. Even the ear of a Mozart and a Beethoven required such an introductory study of this kind. . . . This postulate, by the way, also lies in the nature of the subject itself; for counterpoint is an experiential art, which is founded on the hardest-won and also the subtlest perceptions of composers and

with respect to concepts, adopting elements of both rationalist and empiricist philosophy. While in *Harmonielehre* he emphasizes the role of artistic intuition, he acknowledges at the same time that Nature provides only a hint; both the student of music and composers in the ranks of Mozart and Beethoven require the experiential art of contrapuntal instruction.

(a) Examples of Prolongation with Respect to Concepts

Fourth-species resolutions in the mixed species provide an example of prolongation as it applies to concepts. The following is from Schenker's commentary in *Kontrapunkt* II; his accompanying models are given as Examples 4 and 5.

Regardless of whether the second half-note continues the harmony of the downbeat, as here [Example 128] or introduces a new one [Example 129], at the downbeat where the dissonance appears, the content originally associated with the syncope -9 or -4 (that is, -9-8; -4-3) *is nevertheless conceptually fulfilled*, so that even with voice leadings in which . . . the resolving upbeat shows an interval different from 8 or 3, *the fundamental concepts* -9-8, -4-3 are nevertheless retained in their full purity in our imagination despite such a resolution. The essence of the syncopes -9 and -4 in this sense, therefore, remains completely untouched by the voice leading at the upbeat. . . . what must be seen in the voice leading of our examples is a conflation of two acts, thus an *abbreviation*, which, *without canceling the fundamental concepts -9-8 or -4-3, nevertheless effects a modification in their external appearance, and in this sense introduces a prolongation* [emphasis added] (*CII*: 213).[97]

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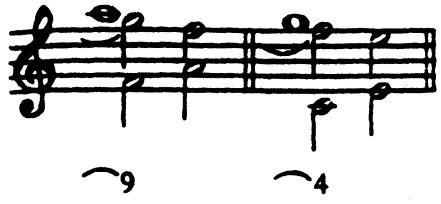
teachers of many centuries. . . ." Schenker (1987): 10, 11. ["Dass eine solche Schulung des Ohres für künstlerische Zwecke . . . durchaus unerlässlich ist, mag ja ohne weiteres einleuchten. Hatte doch selbst eines Mozart, eines Beethoven Ohr auch einer solchen Anleitung bedurft. . . . Dieses Postulat liegt ja übrigens auch in der Natur der Sache selbst, da doch der Kontrapunkt eine Erfahrungskunst ist, welche gegründet ist auf die angestrengtesten und zugleich subtilsten Warhnehmungen von Komponisten und Lehrern einer ganzen Reihe von Jahrhunderten. . . ." Schenker (1910): 16.]

[97] ". . . geht auf dem Niederstreich wo die Dissonanz in Erscheinung tritt, der mit der Synkope -9 beziehungsweise -4 ursprünglich verbundene Inhalt -9-8, -4-3 dennoch begrifflich in Erfüllung, so dass selbst bei Stimmführung, wo . . . der lösende Aufstreich ein anderes Intervall als 8 oder 3 zeigt, sich in unserer Vorstellung trotz solcher Lösung gleichwohl der Urbegriff -9-8, -4-3 in seiner

Example 4. (Schenker's Example 128 from Kontrapunkt II). Syncopations in Mixed Species.



Example 5. (Schenker's Example 129 from Kontrapunkt II*). Syncopations in Mixed Species.*

Here, the notated musical examples depart from strict contrapuntal principles and constitute a transitional region between strict counterpoint and free composition. In the first illustration from Example 4, the suspended fourth-species G forms a 9th over the second-species F on the downbeat. Strict counterpoint requires that the F remain stationary until the dissonant syncopation resolves. Instead, it moves to a new pitch on the upbeat, without changing the harmony. A similar situation obtains in the second illustration of Example 4, this time involving the syncope 4-3. In Example 5, a new modification occurs: the second-species F moves on the upbeat *and* produces a new harmony. In both cases, Schenker accounts for the anomalous

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vollen Reinheit gegenwärtig erhält. Das Wesen der Synkopen -9 and -4 bleibt in diesem Sinne also von dem durch die Stimmführung nachträglich herangebrachten Intervall des Aufstreiches völlig unberührt . . . vielmehr hat man in der Stimmführung unserer Beispiele eine Zusammenziehung zweier Akte, also eine Abbreviation zu sehen, die, ohne dem Urbegriff -9-8 oder -4-3 aufzuheben, gleichwohl aber, wie man sieht, eine Veränderung in dessen äusserer Erscheinung bewirkt und in diesem Sinne eine Prolongation schafft." Schenker (1922): 207, 208.

resolutions with a theoretical tenet he terms abbreviation.[98] The examples imply a temporal succession of events: first, resolution of the suspension; second, motion of the lower voice. Abbreviation transforms the succession into a simultaneity. Thus, the resolution appropriate to the fundamental dissonant-suspension concept does not literally sound in the music; instead, argues Schenker, the concept resides in the listener's imagination or is "fulfilled conceptually."

Schenker's argument for these syncopes encapsulates a foundational principle in his theory: concepts, like laws and eternally valid principles, exist as entities apart from any specific musical instantiation. The music analyst, then, in coming to understand a musical passage, must distinguish the specific compositional realization from the concept that is its basis. In keeping with his differentiation between concept and musical realization, Schenker describes prolongations as modifications in external appearance; the inner essence remains untouched. In this respect, Schenker's notion of a concept resembles Plato's Ideas: both retain their purity regardless of their instantiation in the corporeal world.[99] Notably, however, the modified examples that appear in free composition constitute not an imperfect copy, as they would for Plato,[100] but instead a most satisfying artistic realization.

IV. Conclusions

Philosophers from the late eighteenth through to the early twentieth century were much concerned with the relationship of mechanical and organic. A signal achievement of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century science—the world and nature as mechanism—proved both so powerful in its explanation of observable phenomena and so elegant in its mathematical formulae that

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[98] The concept of abbreviation occurs in the writings of a number of earlier theorists, C.P.E. Bach prominent among them. I am grateful to William Rothstein for drawing my attention to this.

[99] For a discussion of this aspect of Schenker's thought see Pastille (1985): 20.

[100] See, for instance, George Boas, "Idea," in Philip P. Wiener, ed., Vol. 2 (1973): 543.

nineteenth-century organicist devotees were understandably reluctant to jettison it. Thus, despite the romantics' conception of Nature "as a living organic whole which is in some way akin to spirit," [101] a number of writers worked to include mechanics in models that still privileged the organic. In 1798, for instance, Friedrich Schelling wrote: "The moment we raise up our view of nature to a whole [*ein Ganzes*], the opposition between mechanism and organism disappears."[102] Schelling came to such a statement via his argument that mechanics provides a foundation for the organic, with "the latter subsum[ing] the former in itself."[103]

Nineteenth- and early twentieth-century philosophical writings demonstrate continued engagement with mechanical-versus-organic explanation. Two figures provide a sense of the scope and continued import of the topic. Hermann Lotze (1817-81), professor of philosophy at Göttingen from 1844 to 1881, argued that biology must push mechanistic explanations of the organism to their greatest limit. His scientific background, acquired in the faculty of medicine at the University of Leipzig, prompted him to take seriously what he called "the mechanical interpretation of Nature," and at the same time avoid the temptation to invoke "a special vital principle . . . responsible for the maintenance and operation of the organism." Lotze's stance on the matter nevertheless engaged multiple perspectives. While acknowledging that mechanistic explanation succeeds and is certainly proper for empirical science, he found it inadequate for metaphysics. Indeed, in the realm of metaphysics Lotze's philosophy depended upon "the concept of Nature as an organic unity."[104]

Hans Driesch (1867-1941), who served as a professor of philosophy after 1911 at Heidelberg, Cologne, and then Leipzig, published his *Philosophie des Organischen* in 1909. Driesch's philosophy attacked mechanistic biology, finding it inadequate even

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[101] Frederick Copleston S.J., Vol. VII (1963): 16.

[102] "Sobald nur unsere Betrachtung zur Idee der Natur als eines G a n z e n sich emporhebt, verschwindet der Gegensatz zwischen Mechanismus und Organismus." Schelling, *Von der Weltseele* (1798), in *Schellings Werke*, nach der Originalausgabe, ed. Mandred Schröter, Vol. 1, München (1927): 416. Cited in Werner Keil (1995): 77.

[103] Copleston (1963): 110.

[104] Copleston (1963): 377-379.

for scientific purposes. In the manner of organicist philosophers before him, and in direct opposition to Lotze, he posited an "autonomous active principle which directs the vital processes." Driesch's general philosophy, moreover, included a concept of the organism that he "extrapolated to apply to the world as a whole."[105]

The writings of Lotze and Driesch provide a sense of the liveliness with which German-speaking philosophers carried forward the topic of mechanic-versus-organic explanation in the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Schenker's teacher Eduard Hanslick, moreover, active at the University of Vienna where Schenker studied, engaged precisely such issues in his *Vom musikalisch-Schönen.*[106] It is thus unsurprising that Schenker should have taken up the matter with such vigor and employed it in so foundational a manner. His 1895 readership, many of whom were devoted to organicist explanations of art, would undoubtedly have been familiar with the terms of the opposition. Indeed, Schenker predicates his arguments on this very assumption, reporting that "[t]he highest praise that can be rendered to a musical artwork nowadays is to say that it is constructed 'organically.'"[107] The polemical flavor of the opposition, moreover, was surely irresistible for him. In the philosophical context of late nineteenth-century Vienna, discussing *Der Geist der musikalischen Technik* would count, at one extreme, as a nonsensical enterprise and, at the other, as a pointed challenge to a philosophical tradition that frequently held mechanical and organic,

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[105] Copleston (1963): 383-384.

[106] See, for instance, the following: "Through this primitive, mysterious power, *into the workshop of which the human eye will never penetrate*, there resounds in the mind/spirit of the composer a theme, a motive. To the origin of this grain of seed we cannot return; we must accept it as a simple fact." Eduard Hanslick (1986): 32. ["Durch jene primitive, geheimnisvolle Macht, in deren Werkstätte das Menschenauge nun und nimmermehr dringen wird, erklingt in dem Geist des Komponisten ein Thema, ein Motiv. Hinter die Entstehung dieses ersten Samenkorns können wir nicht zurückgehen, wir müssen es als einfache Thatsache hinnehmen." Hanslick (1902): 83.] In 1896, one year after Schenker published "Geist," Hanslick's treatise was in its 9th edition.

[107] Schenker (2007): 328. ["Heisst doch das höchste Lob, das heute einem musikalischen Kunstwerk gezollt wird, das Werk sei „organisch" gebaut." Schenker (1895): 148.]

Geist and *Technik*, as opposed and irreconcilable. Schenker intends it as a challenge, as Korsyn ably demonstrates.[108]

Polemics remained integral to the fabric of Schenker's theorizing across his career. One element of that polemic—the mechanical/organic opposition, introduced but not systematically explored in "Geist"—has served as the focus of the present study. Throughout I have emphasized ways in which Schenker contrasts elements of the mechanical and the organic, holding them as irreconcilable opposites. Concerning counterpoint and free composition, however, he worked both to demarcate them and, at the same time, to abstract laws and concepts from the former that held true for the latter. Contrapuntal mechanics, practiced and honed in the context of exercises limited in scope and purpose, amount to compositional calisthenics. This is one of the simplest and most straightforward ways to think about them. As early as "Geist," however, Schenker hinted at the tenuousness of the boundaries between mechanics and the inspired (organic) work of art.

Schenker continued to critique received prescriptions that hold opposed *Geist* and *Technik* much beyond his 1895 publication. In fact, as if to reinforce the incisive polemic of that early essay, in his introduction to *Kontrapunkt* I Schenker adduces an organic analogy to explain the workings of technique:

> Is technique not the fulfillment on the part of the artist of those demands which the subject matter itself, far above the artist, imposes on him? In pursuit of such fulfillment, is not technique then a necessary, good, and—so to speak—healthy thing? Is not the technique of a work comparable to the health of a body whose organs fulfill all the functions nature demands of them? (*CI*: xxi).[109]

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[108] Korsyn (1993): 102, 103.

[109] "Versteht man denn unter 'Technik' nicht etwa die Erfüllung jener Forderungen seitens des Künstlers, die der Stoff, hoch über dem Künstler stehend, gar selbst an diesen stellt? Denkt man sich, im Sinne solcher Erfüllung, die Technik denn nicht immer nur als eine wahre, gute, sozusagen gesunde Technik? Ist Technik eines Werkes in diesem Sinne nicht wirklich vergleichbar der Gesundheit eines Körpers, dessen Organe sämtlich die Funktionen ausüben, wie sie die Natur von ihnen eben abverlangt?" Schenker (1910): 14.

Here Schenker demonstrates his commitment to organic models by holding up physical health as exemplar. At the same time, he resists received notions of technique as mechanical and lifeless.

Revisiting the topic of *Technik* in the "Miscellanea" to *Meisterwerk* 3, Schenker clarifies complaints his adversaries have leveled against it:

> It is said of Goethe, Schiller and Hölderlin that they lost the immediacy of poetic creativity as a result of their studies of Kant. When it comes to music, in particular, composers are warned against the perils of a so-called music-theoretical training. Such training, so people say, greatly inhibits freedom of creativity. True, where training and the accumulation of knowledge do not lead to inspiration this prejudice may have some justification. History, on the other hand, teaches us that the great masters could never have become for us and for art what they have in fact become had they not possessed the most comprehensive and profound training in all aspects of their art.[110]

Familiar criticisms of technique—described here as excessive "study" and "music theoretical training"—include lack of spontaneity and inspiration in artistic creation. Schenker counters this objection directly, contending that precisely this kind of preparation is essential to the success, the ongoing artistic health, of the composer.

If polemics and "irreconcilable" opposites enticed Schenker on one level, then the potential to bridge such opposites proved equally compelling on another. His two-pronged agenda, spelled out most forcefully in *Kontrapunkt* I, is a powerful case-in-point. Securing the place of counterpoint both as foundational pedagogical discipline and potent underpinning of free

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[110] Schenker (1930): 70. ["Es wird behauptet, Goethe, Schiller, Hölderlin hätten sich über ihren Kant-Studien um die Unmittelbarheit des dichterischen Schaffens gebracht. Insbesondere aber wird der Tondichter vor der sog. musiktheoritischen Bildung als einer grossen Gefahr gewarnt: jene Bildung unterbinde, meint man, zu sehr die Freiheit des Schaffens. Freilich, wem Bildung und Erkenntnis nicht in Eingebung münden, der mag sich zu solchem Vorurteil wohl bekennen, dagegen lehrt die Geschichte, dass die grossen Meister und der Kunst niemals das hätten werden können, was sie uns wirklich geworden sind, wenn sie nicht in allen Dingen, die zu ihrer Kunst gehörten, die umfassendste und gründlichste Bildung besessen hätten." Schenker (1997): 107.]

composition, that is, imputing to it characteristics both mechanical and organic, fleshed out that agenda. Thus, as detailed above, when discussing the passing tone in the (corporeal) species exercise, Schenker invokes the imaginary, or the non-corporeal, as a means to extend in time the consonant origin of the dissonant passing tone. In his explication, the imaginary functions in a manner analogous to the *geistig Stufen* tones, whose realm is free composition. Finally, with his appeal to laws and concepts, extended via prolongation, Schenker eliminates entirely the opposition of rules and laws, putting in its place a formulation founded not on opposition but on continuity.

Several additional formulations by Schenker encapsulate his theoretical thrust and reinforce for us the centrality of this program to Schenker's work. In the introduction to *Kontrapunkt* I, Schenker cites a passage from Goethe's *Faust* that freely alters the normal ordering of German sentence components:

I have—alas!—studied
philosophy, law and medicine as well,
and—unfortunately!—theology
too, thoroughly, with zealous application! (*CI*: 12, 13)[111]

Schenker has two things to say about the passage. First, he argues that contextual considerations motivate the alterations. These include parameters both technical (prosody and rhyme) and dramatic (Faust's psychological state in that moment of the drama). He categorizes the latter under the heading "psychic forces." Second, he describes the grammatical anomalies of Goethe's sentence as "prolongations of the most ordinary grammatical laws." Then, transferring the issue to music, Schenker claims that "the phenomena of free composition . . . are invariably to be understood only as the prolongations of those principles (*CI*: 12, 13)."[112] In these terms, then, the mechanical (=the species) is not antithetical but preparatory to the organic.

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[111] "Habe nun, ach! Philosophie,/Juristerie und Medizin,/ Und, leider! auch Theologie/Durchaus studiert, mit heissem Bemühn!" Schenker (1910): 19.

[112] "Wer kann denn übersehen, dass er, trotz allerhand Umstellungen, im Grunde doch nur Prolongationen auch noch der normalsten grammatischen Gesetze

Near the end of *Kontrapunkt* II, Schenker adduces an umbilical-cord analogy to elucidate the relationship between strict counterpoint and free composition:

> According to the above experiments, it is possible in some way to find a unifying tone of longer value that interprets the movement and voice leading of voices led in various rhythms; with this discovery a bridge to free composition is opened, and at the same time it is established that free composition, despite its so extensively altered appearances, is mysteriously bound by this ellipse, as though by an umbilical cord, to strict counterpoint (*C*II: 270.)[113]

In this context the species (=mechanics) serve metaphorically as the parent whose umbilical cord feeds and sustains the more expansive creative potentials of free composition. At least through the publication of *Kontrapunkt* II, then, and again in *Der freie Satz* (see quotation above, p. 17) Schenker argued for compelling connections between the two. Indeed, when viewed within the greater whole of laws and concepts, for Schenker, previously hard boundaries between strict counterpoint and free composition blur, if they do not disappear altogether.

Recent research tracing the philosophical provenance of Schenker's ideas convincingly demonstrates the broad philosophical swath from which Schenker drew his theoretical language and concepts.[114] And so it is with some hesitance that I put forward a single concept—dialectic—as a model for Schenker's efforts to relate the mechanical and organic in the forms of species

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augweist? Ähnlich formen ja auch die neuen Gewalten, die der freie Satz in der Musik mit sich bringt, eine scheinbar neue Ordnung, und dennoch sieht der Kenner im Hintergrunde tief und mystisch die grundlegenden kontrapunktischen Gesetze wirken, so dass die Erscheinungen im freien Satz durchaus nur als deren Prolongationen wieder zu erkennen sind." Schenker (1910): 20.

[113] "Mit der Erkenntnis, dass gemäss obigen Versuchen zu den in verschiedenen Rhythmus geführten Stimmen sich irgenwie ein die Bewegung und Stimmführung deutender vereinheitlichender Ton grösseren Wertes finden lässt, ist nun eine Brücke zum freien Satz geschlagen und zugleich festgestellt, dass der freie Satz trotz seinen doch so veilfach veränderten Erscheinungen mit eben dieser Ellipse wie gleichsam mittels einer Nabelschnur geheimnisvoll an den strengen Satz gebunden ist." Schenker (1922): 260, 261.

[114] I refer especially to articles discussed in the introduction to this article. Many others could be included.

counterpoint and free composition. Dialectic nevertheless proves fitting for this aspect of Schenker's theorizing because it emphasizes not only opposition but also a philosophical means for resolution. Additionally, it offers an insightful alternative to the violent hierarchies proposed by Derrida (see above, p. 3). Finally, it supplies an intellectual framework for Schener's polemic.

Schenker makes abundantly clear his familiarity with the Fichtean dialectic formulation thesis→antithesis→synthesis[115] when explicating the passing tone in *Kontrapunkt* I. There he writes: "*In the beginning is consonance*, that is, agreement! Only after a consonance follows the antithesis, the dissonance, and ultimately agreement has the last word [emphasis original]! (*CI*: 184)."[116]

Hegel's dialectic, as summarized by Michael Inwood, also supplies valuable insight:

> (1) One or more concepts are taken as fixed, sharply defined and distinct from each other. This is the stage of UNDERSTANDING.
>
> (2) When we reflect on such categories, one or more contradictions emerge in them. This is the stage of dialectic proper, or of dialectical or negative REASON.
>
> (3) The result of this dialectic is a new, higher category, which embraces the earlier categories and resolves the contradiction involved in them. This is the step of speculation or positive reason. Hegel suggests that this new category is a 'unity of opposites'. . . .[117]

If we apply Hegel's first step to Schenker's efforts, we consider that history has taken as "fixed, sharply defined and distinct from each other" concepts of the mechanical and the organic, whose counterparts in music are strict counterpoint and free composition.

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[115] Michael Inwood points out that "Fichte's three-step procedure of a thesis . . . , and antithesis . . . , and a synthesis . . . also influenced Hegel's dialectic. (But Hegel uses the terms 'thesis,' 'antithesis,' 'synthesis' *only* in his account of Kant.)" See Inwood (1992): 81.

[116] ["Am Anfang ist die Konsonanz, die Übereinstimmung! Erst auf eine Konsonanz folgt der Widerspruch, die Dissonanz, bis endlich Übereinstimmung das letzte Word behält!" Schenker (1910): 248.]

[117] Hegel, on "Dialectic," in Inwood (1992): 81, 82. Inwood's discussion explicates Hegel's dialectic as defined in the philosopher's *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (1817), Vol. 1, and *The Science of Logic* (1812-16).

Proceeding to the second step, reflection on these categories revealed disturbing contradictions to Schenker. As early as "Geist," demarcating strict counterpoint and free composition dissatisfied him. By the time he wrote his Preface and Introduction to *Kontrapunkt* I (1910), he engaged the contradiction head-on and proffered a resolution to the impasse: prolongation (*CI*: 13). Prolongation achieves the third of Hegel's steps, a new and higher category, which "embraces the earlier categories and resolves the contradiction involved in them." In *Kontrapunkt* I, as detailed above, Schenker introduced crucial ideas that put flesh on his prolongational skeleton: eternally valid principles, concepts, and laws, which serve as instruments or categories of prolongation.

An additional aspect of Hegel's dialectic illuminates the current discussion: the necessity of opposition as a force to define individual terms. Hegel holds that opposites "change into each other when they are intensified." He supplies the example of a powerful being who "annihilates all resistance." When this happens, the being "lapses into impotence, since he no longer has an opponent to test, reveal and sustain his logic."[118] Schenker shows affinity with this aspect of Hegel's thought when he introduces the passing tone in *Kontrapunkt* I. In that context he claims that the "transient independence [of the passing tone] increases the value and power of the unity of the two voices . . ." (*CI*: 183, 184).[119] In other words, the contrasting and clarifying power of the dissonance renders more powerful the consonance's effect. If we translate this idea to Schenker's theoretical apparatus more generally, we could say that the mechanical in his theory supplies an opposition to the organic that forces it to define itself more sharply. Were it unnecessary for the organic to contend with a perceived mechanical "threat," then it would express itself less strongly, or not at all.

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[118] Inwood (1992): 82.

[119] "Vielmehr steigert die vorübergehende Selbständigkeit den Wert und die Kraft der von Anfang an angestrebten und doch wieder auch behaupteten Einheit beider Stimmen." Schenker (1910): 247.

"Was Schenker always an organicist?" In my own investigations of Schenker's work I have found this question to be too polarizing. What is abundantly clear is Schenker's consistent engagement across his career of elements clustered into a concept called "organicism." Also uncontestable is evidence of such engagement already in Schenker's first decade of publication. Allan Keiler, recall, notes in "Geist" Schenker's unswerving preference for content over form, a tenet central to organic formulations from the early nineteenth century.[120] In this study, moreover, I highlighted Schenker's argument in favor of an organic compositional process. Notably, even though he claims such a process is "very difficult to substantiate," he is nevertheless "convinced that it is a fact."[121]

While such elements in "Geist" may buttress an argument for Schenker's being more organicist than not, further examination reveals a deep-seated uncertainty in his stance. In the paragraphs immediately following his presenting an organic method of composition as a fact, Schenker writes:

> But this organic element remains organic only so long as it does not become contaminated by consciousness, and the moment the composer directs his imagination toward the hunt for similarities, then that which otherwise could easily have seemed organic to us devolves into the merely "thematic"—that is, into *intentional similarity*. To be circumspect, then, we can only discuss that which is organic hypothetically; a particular similarity has actually arisen *organically* in the imagination only inasmuch as the composer has *not intended* it.[122]

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[120] Keiler (1989): 286. (Cited earlier in footnote 6.) Schlegel's classic description of organic form comes in his 22nd Vienna lecture: "Organical form, again, is innate; it unfolds itself from within, and acquires its determination contemporaneously with the perfect development of the germ." Schlegel (1846): 340. ["Die organische Form hingegen ist eingeboren, sie bildet von innen heraus und erreicht ihre Bestimmtheit zugleich mit der vollständigen Entwicklung des Keimes." Schlegel (1967): 109.] Schenker's statement in "Geist" is also apropos: "In the strict sense, each and every content has its own form. . . ." Schenker (2007): 331. ["Im strengen Sinn hat ja schliesslich ein jeder Inhalt seine eigene Form. . . ." Schenker (1895): 152.

[121] See above, p. 16, and footnote 35.

[122] Schenker (2007): 330. ["Jedoch ist dieses Organische natürlich nur so lange organisch, so lange es vom Bewusstsein nicht befleckt worden, und im

In the excerpt's penultimate sentence Schenker argues that the only appropriate application for the organic is hypothetical; immediately following, he allows that the organic as an element of compositional process is actual.[123] To my mind, such hesitant formulations encourage our reading of "Geist" not so much as the work of a genuine anti-organicist as of a deeply ambivalent one.

In sum: this study's central concern has been Schenker's foundational use of the opposition mechanical/organic in his efforts to clarify relations between species counterpoint and free composition. Schenker explores the opposition as early as "Geist" and returns to it numerous times in later publications to accomplish the rapprochement central to his theoretical agenda. A primary consequence of his endeavor was a theoretical paradigm in which the species gained a new and philosophically reputable premise: a basis in laws and concepts. This foundation, in turn, permitted a closer and more flexible relationship between two musical realms frequently considered oppositional, and fueled a lifelong effort to demonstrate *Der Geist der musikalischen Technik.*

Augenblick, wo der Componist seiner Phantasie den Weg und die Suche nach Aehnlichkeiten anbefohlen hat, sinkt, was uns leicht sonst organisch scheinen könnte, zu blos „Thematischem" d.h. ähnlich Gewolltem herab. Was organisch ist, ist deshalb vorsichtigerweise immer nur hypothetisch zu behandeln: vorausgesetzt, dass der Componist jene Aehnlichkeit nicht gewollt hat, ist sie in der Phantasie wirklich organisch entstanden." Schenker (1895): 150.] I noted this ambivalent stance already in Schenker's essay on Eugen d'Albert. See footnote 7.

[123] On the criterion of causality in musical content, which Schenker deems essential for organicism in musical content, his stance is unequivocally negative (see the final quotation given in footnote 34 on pp. 15, 16).

Acknowledgements

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